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A

HISTORY

OF THE

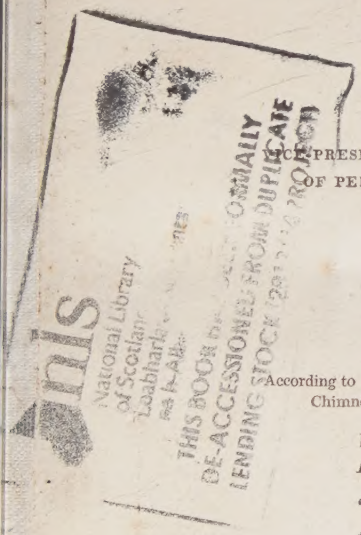
Life and Death

OF

JOHN, EARL OF GOWRIE,

WITH

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATIONS.



BY THE

REV. JAMES SCOTT,

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE LITERARY AND ANTIQUARIAN SOCIETY OF PERTH, AND LATE SENIOR MINISTER OF THAT CITY.

Veritas Temporis Filia.—ERASMI ADAGIUM.

"Truth the Daughter of Time."

According to Calderwood, the following Latin Distich was anciently painted on a Chimney Brace, in the Castle of Ruthven, now called Huntingtower:

Vera diu latitant, sed, longo temporis usu,
Emergunt tandem quæ latuere diu.—CALD. MS.

"Truths which were long conceal'd emerge to light;
And controverted facts are render'd bright.

EDINBURGH:

Printed by Balfour and Clarke,

AND SOLD BY WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH;

AND DAVID MORISON, JUN. PERTH.

1818.

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TO THE

LITERARY AND ANTIQUARIAN

SOCIETY OF PERTH,

THIS WORK

IS

RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED

BY

THE EDITOR.

PREFACE

HAVING been above half a century Minister of Perth, the town in which, in the year 1600, John, Earl of Gowrie, and his brother Alexander Ruthven, were slain, I thought it incumbent upon me to give a pretty large account of what I have learned concerning that tragical, and, commonly reckoned, dark affair. I had full access to the parochial records, and the opportunity of conversing with aged people, who, from memory or tradition, were in use to relate the transactions of former times.

In what I have written, it has been my endeavour occasionally to suggest what I hoped

might tend to promote a regard to serious religion, and a just abhorrence of vice; and also to excite in those persons, who, in some unimportant points, differ in their religious and political opinions, charitable sentiments of one another. The time will arrive "when there was nothing covered, which shall not be revealed, and hid, that shall not be known; when every one shall receive according to the things done in his body, whether his deeds were good or bad."

I have prefixed some Preliminary Dissertations and Family Statements, suitable to my principal subject, and which may help to illustrate it. But having had to consider many disputed facts, my narratives are thereby more diffuse, and abounding with minute particulars, than they otherwise might have been.

The King's Narrative, and the depositions of the Witnesses examined at the trial of the Earl of Gowrie, and his brother, are faithfully copied in Mr. William Panton's Dissertation on the Gowrie Conspiracy, which was

printed at Perth, by Morison, in the year 1812. The depositions were also fully transcribed in Lord Cromarty's publication, in the year 1713.

JAMES SCOTT.

PERTH,
October 8, 1813.

CONTENTS.

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATIONS.

Page

I. A List of Tracts relating to what is called "Gowrie's Conspiracy," with a short account of them 3

II. Concerning Dorothea Stewart, Countess of Gowrie 21

III. Family Statements 47

1. Queen Margaret . . . . . ib.

2. Lady Jane Stewart 57

3. The Lords of Ruthven 65

4. The Children of William, Earl of Gowrie 92

HISTORY OF JOHN, EARL OF GOWRIE.

CHAPTER I. 105

CHAPTER II. 128

CHAPTER III. 149

CHAPTER IV. 173

CHAPTER V. 200

CHAPTER VI. 224

CHAPTER VII. 249

CHAPTER VIII. 276

CHAPTER IX. 308

CHAPTER X. 331

PRELIMINARY

DISSERTATIONS.

PRELIMINARY DISSERTATIONS.

I.

A LIST OF TRACTS

RELATING TO WHAT IS CALLED "GOWRIE'S CONSPIRACY," WITH A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THEM.

II.

CONCERNING DOROTHEA STEWART,

COUNTESS OF GOWRIE.

III.

FAMILY STATEMENTS, viz.

1. QUEEN MARGARET. 2. LADY JANET STEWART. 3. THE LORDS OF RUTHVEN. 4. THE CHILDREN OF WILLIAM, EARL OF GOWRIE.

I.

LIST OF TRACTS,

RELATING TO WHAT IS CALLED "GOWRIE'S CONSPIRACY,"

WITH A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THEM.

CONTENTS.

The Tracts mentioned are, 1. The King's Own Account. 2. An Early Vindication of the Earl of Gowrie—suppressed. 3. A Latin Treatise. 4. David Moyses' Memoirs. 5. Spottiswood's History. 6. Calderwood's History. 7. Sanderson's History. 8. Earl of Cromarty's Book. 9. Mr. John Anderson's Book. 10. The Edinburgh M. S. 11. Stewart's Collections. 12. Robertson's History. 13. Lord Hailes' Pamphlet. 14. Mr. Cant's History. 15. Mr. Alexander Duff's Essay. 16. Guthrie's History. 17. Laing's History. 18. Pinkerton's Essay. 19. Foreign Writers. 20. Parish Registers, and Diaries. 21. Panton's Dissertations.

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1. THE KING'S OWN ACCOUNT.

In the end of August 1600, was published by authority, "A Discourse of the Unnatural and Vile Conspiracy, attempted against his Majesty's Person at St. Johnston, upon the fifth of August."

It contains the King's own account of the fact, which, as has often been observed, varies in some of its circumstances from what the king had before publicly declared.

Annexed were the depositions of James Wemyss of Bogie, and of Mr. William Rhind, which were taken at Falkland, August 9, 1600; also the first deposition of Andrew Henderson, and the second deposition of Mr. William Rhind, which were taken at Falkland, August 20, 1600. Mr. Rhind's depositions were emitted by him, when he was under the torture of the boots.

2. AN EARLY VINDICATION OF THE EARL OF GOWRIE.

At the same time that the King's account was published, if not previous to it, was printed a vindication of the late Earl of Gowrie, and of his brother Mr. Alexander Ruthven, from the charge of treason. Particular mention is made of this vindication, in a letter, from Sir John Carey, Governor of Berwick, to Sir Robert Cecil, of date September 4, 1600.

A manuscript book, unhappily mutilated in some of its leaves, belonging to the Literary and Anti-

quarian Society of Perth, which I think should be called "Stewart's Collections," says, "After the Earl of Gowrie's death, a small treatise was published in his vindication, but was suppressed. Some copies of it were, however, preserved; and Sir Robert Douglas has said, that his brother Sir William had seen one of these vindications, and that also several old gentlemen in Perthshire owned that they had seen it."

3. A LATIN TREATISE.

In 1601, was published a Latin treatise, entitled, "Ruvenorum Conjuratio," (the Conspiracy of the Ruthvens.) It was chiefly a translation into the Latin language, of the king's account published by authority. The preface to it contains a violent declamation against the Earl of Gowrie, for his having become, from being "a wise, and learned, and good young man, a companion of devils, and a practiser of magical arts." I suspect the author of it was Mr. Patrick Galloway, then one of the king's chaplains, as it exactly corresponds with the sermon which he delivered at the Cross of Edinburgh, August 11th, 1600.

4. DAVID MOYSES' MEMOIRS.

David Moyses had been thirty-seven years a servant of King James VI. At the end of his memoirs, he inserts the King's account of the Gowrie Conspiracy. He blames the Presbyterian ministers for their remaining incredulous. "Yea," says he, "after the truth and circumstances of the whole conspiracy were testified by five hundred gentlemen, who were at that time at St. Johnston, and saw with their eyes the form and manner of that treasonable practice and conspiracy."

But that very circumstance which he mentions as an argument against the Earl was in his favour, for it is certain that the King, by some means or other, had such a number of armed men assembled from the country, very few of whom indeed knew the cause of their being called to Perth, that he was in no danger either from the Earl, or from the people of the town; and after the King's arrival with his retinue from Falkland, the Earl had no longer the command of his own house.

5. SPOTTISWOOD'S HISTORY.

Archbishop Spottiswood professedly vindicates the King. He uses no arguments, but appears implicitly to rely on the account published by authority. He says the "Earl and his brother were two youths of great hopes, at whose hands no man could have expected such an attempt." He further says, "the Conspiracy was plotted by the Earl alone, and only communicated to his brother." Afterwards, when he comes to speak of the trial and execution of George Sprott, in 1608, for having been privy, along with the late George Logan of Restalrig, to the traitorous design of the Earl of Gowrie, he treats Sprott's confession and evidence as a mere fiction, and calls it "the invention of the man's own brain."

6. CALDERWOOD'S HISTORY.

Mr. David Calderwood, before the year 1600, had begun to be attentive to the public transac-

tions. In that part of his history, which has not yet been printed, he gives a full account of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother. He shews the absurdities in the King's publication, and points out contradictions in the depositions of the witnesses. He states several important particulars well known in his time, and which coincide with the traditions handed down, especially in Perth and its neighbourhood.

He concludes his account with the following Latin distich, which he says was seen many years painted above the chimney-brace of the castle of Ruthven, now called Huntingtower:

> *" Vera diu latitant, sed longo temporis usu*
> *Emergunt tandem, quæ latuere diu."*

That is, There are truths which long lie hid, but in a course of time, these truths which were long in darkness emerge into light.

7. SANDERSON'S HISTORY.

William Sanderson, Esquire, in his History of the Lives of Queen Mary of Scotland, and of James

her son and successor, printed at London in 1656, relates some circumstances of the Gowrie affair deserving of notice; particularly, that they who had killed Mr. Alexander Ruthven, having shut the King into another room, covered the dead body with the King's coat. When the Earl entered with his two swords, they shewed what they called the King's body; and then the Earl in his astonishment, "sinking the points of his weapons," made no resistance till his own life was attacked.

8. EARL OF CROMARTY'S BOOK.

In 1713, George Earl of Cromarty published what he called, "An Historical Account of the Conspiracies of Gowrie, and Robert Logan of Restalrig, against King James VI."

It does not contain a copy of the King's account, nor copies of those depositions of the witnesses which were taken at Falkland, on the ninth and twentieth days of August. Neither does it contain the depositions of Mr. Thomas Cranston, George Craigengelt, and Donald M'Duff, who were executed at Perth, August 23, 1600. But it contains what was reckoned new and material infor-

mation, as it gives at full length from the public records, copies of the depositions of the witnesses who were examined, by "the Lords of Articles," November 15, 1600; also a full copy of the process against George Sprot, notary in Eymouth, and the deceased Robert Logan of Restalrig, which took place in August, 1608.

9. MR. JOHN ANDERSON'S BOOK.

In 1714, Mr. John Anderson, minister of Dunbarton, a shrewd writer, in his book of reply to Mr. Thomas Rhind, about Church Government, introduced a critical examination of Lord Cromarty's recent "Historical Account." In the manuscript book I have before mentioned, under the name of "Stewart's Collections," is a copy of Mr. Anderson's spirited essay, together with the addition of sundry particulars, which he had afterwards extracted from Calderwood's manuscript history.

In the conclusion of his essay, in which he had used a good deal of irony, he says, "The Earl of Gowrie used the black art, and wore magical spells in his girdle. What crime was not such a person

capable of? His brother's whole conduct in the management of the conspiracy, shews him to have been frantic, Why then should we any longer doubt whether a man in compact (with the devil,) and his brother "*non compos*," would attempt the greatest villainy? But then both the Earl and his brother had always, till that very day, passed under the character of wise, sober, and virtuous gentlemen. Was it any wonder that (Ministers and others) demurred, and could not at first dash be persuaded, that they had, all of a sudden, become, the one of them a devil, and the other distracted?"

10. THE EDINBURGH MANUSCRIPT.

I have before me the copy of a very valuable manuscript, entitled, "Memoirs of the Ruthvens Earls of Gowrie." I can only give it the name of "the Edinburgh Manuscript." It seems to have been written some time before the middle of the last century, and by a gentleman of superior talents and education, who was well acquainted with the traditionary accounts in the shire of Perth. Among other things, the author relates the cir-

cumstance of the great number of gentlemen and armed horsemen from the country who assembled at Perth on the day of the conspiracy, without knowing the real design for which they were called to go thither; and for confirmation of the truth of this circumstance, he refers to the second volume of Nisbet's Heraldry.

11. STEWART'S COLLECTIONS.

In the manuscript book before mentioned, to which I gave the name of "Stewart's Collections," is a copious "Dissertation concerning the family of the Ruthvens Earls of Gowrie." The event at Perth, August 5, 1600, is circumstantially related, and in a manner corresponding to the traditionary accounts.

The author says, "About fifty-four, or sixty years ago, there were several old gentlemen and farmers in Perthshire, then about eighty years of age, whose fathers saw and knew all the circumstances of this matter, at the time it was transacted, and which they handed down to their families; and which is the cause of the universal belief of

the natives of that country, then and now." The author adds, "To this day, there is hardly a public meeting of religious people of the shires of Fife, Perth or Angus, in which the destruction of the Gowries, when it is mentioned, is not always regarded with horror and disgust."

The description which this author gives of the general sentiments of the people, accords with the complaint uttered by the Earl of Cromarty, viz. that the affair of Gowrie was all along made a handle of, in any opposition that was made to the measures of the court, particularly in what his Lordship calls "The seditious meetings in the years 1637, 1638, 1639, and 1640."

12. ROBERTSON'S HISTORY.

Principal Robertson, in his History of Scotland, published in 1759, states the improbable circumstances mentioned in the King's account, and the contradictions which appeared in the depositions of the witnesses. He hints an opinion, that if the Earl of Gowrie was really engaged in a plot, the design of it was, that the king might be sent as a

prisoner to Queen Elizabeth in England. Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, had communicated to him the papers he had collected from the public offices relating to the Gowrie Conspiracy, and explained to him the sentiments he entertained.

13. LORD HAILES' PAMPHLET.

About the year 1770, Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes, printed a pamphlet, containing an exact copy of the King's account, with the depositions of some of the witnesses. Those parts of the account which he thought most deserving of regard, were printed in Italics. According to his extensive historical reading, and his juridical skill, he interspersed critical remarks, and quotations from authors, tending to the exculpation of the Earl of Gowrie.

The pamphlet is before me. The year in which it was printed is not mentioned, nor is the name of the author prefixed. But there can be no doubt of its being the production of Lord Hailes, and I suppose it has been inserted in the late collection which has been made of his works.

14. MR. CANT'S HISTORY OF PERTH.

In 1774, Mr. James Cant, in his appendix to his edition of Mr. Henry Adamson's "Muse's Threnodie," or Metrical History of Perth, inserted a copy of the above work of Lord Hailes, as having been given by a "judicious writer," but he was not then at liberty to mention his name. Mr. Cant then added some extracts, which he had taken from Calderwood's manuscript History.

15. MR. ALEXANDER DUFF'S DISSERTATION.

In 1785, the late Mr. Alexander Duff, minister of Tibbermuir, in the presbytery of Perth, delivered to the Perth Antiquarian Society his written Discourse on the Gowrie Conspiracy. He had availed himself of the traditions he had then heard from some old people of Perth, and also of the records of some conciliatory benefits which the King conferred upon the town, after the death of its provost, the Earl of Gowrie.

The Dissertation is written with that honest warmth of temper, and that abhorrence of every thing base and cruel, for which the worthy author was always eminently remarkable. An incorrect copy was not long ago printed in the "Memorabilia of Perth." But the original and genuine copy is in the possession of the Society.

16. GUTHRY'S HISTORY.

Mr. Guthry, in his History of Scotland, says, "This autumn (1600), one of the most extraordinary conspiracies that history mentions, broke out in Scotland. I shall relate the particulars as drawn up by James himself, and published by his authority; and afterwards make some remarks upon the improbabilities, contradictions, and circumstances that attended the whole story." Mr. Guthry then goes on to do as he had proposed.

17. LAING'S HISTORY.

Malcolm Laing, Esq. in the first volume of his History of Scotland, published in the year 1800, explodes the pretended authenticity of the letters, and of the whole evidence, which were produced at the trial of Sprott and Logan in 1608.

18. PINKERTON'S ESSAY.

In the appendix to the first volume of Mr. Laing's History, is inserted, "An historical Dissertation on the Gowrie Conspiracy, written in 1798, by John Pinkerton, Esq." Mr. Pinkerton acquits the Earl of Gowrie of any traitorous design, but endeavours to throw blame on the Earl's brother, Mr. Alexander Ruthven, and Ann of Denmark, the wife of King James VI. He relates a very curious anecdote of this Queen and Mr. Ruthven, on the authority of Lord Hailes; which anecdote also appears in Mr. Cant's Notes on "The Muses Threnodie."

Mr. Pinkerton, however, seems not to have confidently relied on the opinion he expressed. His Dissertation is an entertaining specimen of his inquisitive genius, and of his historical erudition; but he seems not to have remembered, that the last words of Mr. Ruthven were, "Alas! I am not in the wyte"—meaning that he was free from blame.

19. FOREIGN WRITERS.

Many English, and other foreign writers, have occasionally taken notice of the Gowrie Conspiracy. They have generally expressed their opinions in favour of the Earl, and considered the affair as a plot of the King, to get rid of a formidable opponent to his political designs.

20. PARISH REGISTERS AND DIARIES.

The parish registers still extant at Perth, and some old diaries written at the time, particularly a MS. in my possession, to which I give the name of Fleming and Mercer's Chronicle, furnish much in-

formation concerning the Gowrie family, which I afterwards will make use of. I only remark at present, that the youth of the two brothers affords a presumptive argument in their favour. John, Earl of Gowrie, had not long before completed the 21st year of his age. His brother Alexander, who was killed alongst with him, was, according to the baptism register at Perth, baptised January 15, 1580-1, the witnesses, or godfathers, being John, Earl of Athole, and Alexander, Lord Hume. His age, therefore, at the time of his death, was only nineteen years and about seven months.

It cannot easily be conceived, that two men so young in years, were capable of forming such a deep and traitorous design as has been ascribed to them. Their peaceable dispositions, their virtues and good sense, and their regard to religious principles, had always been acknowledged. It may therefore seem incredible, that they should all at once have become monstrously wicked, and been seized with such a degree of frenzy, as to hope that, without their having any confederates to rely upon, they could succeed in an attempt against the King, and be safe in their traitorous action, in the midst of five hundred gentlemen, who, Moyses

informs us, were present in Perth at the time. Most of these gentlemen had been brought together on various pretences, for the purpose of protecting and assisting the King in accomplishing his cruel scheme, but without their having knowledge of what he was intending to do.

21. PANTON'S DISSERTATIONS.

Since my writing the above list of tracts, Mr. William Panton has published his book on the Gowrie Conspiracy, printed by Morison at Perth in the year 1812. He fully transcribes the account given by the King, and the depositions of the witnesses who were examined at the trial of the deceased brothers; also the feigned letters produced, and the depositions of the witnesses taken, at the trial of Logan of Restalrig, and of Sprott the notary. Mr. Panton has exposed the deficiency of evidence in both these trials, in the most masterly and satisfactory manner. No such advocate was allowed at these trials, to object to the admission of improper witnesses, or to cross examine those who were admitted.

II.

OF THE COUNTESS OF GOWRIE.

CONTENTS.

Subject proposed. Old Lines of Poetry. Claimants of the Crown of England, in the year 1600. The Lady Arabella Stewart. Timidity of early Writers. Extract from the State Paper Office, London. Lord Strathallan quoted. The Subject formerly was of a political kind. Earl of Cromarty quoted. Crawfurd quoted. Bishop Burnet quoted. Crawfurd's Imperfect Evidence. Principal Robertson quoted. Lessly, Bishop of Ross, quoted. David Hume of Godscroft, Bishop Keith, and Duncan Robertson, quoted. The most probable Conjecture. Marriage of William, Master of Ruthven, and Dorothea Stewart. Character and Affections of the Countess of Gowrie.

My endeavour, in this dissertation, will be to ascertain the parentage of Dorothea Stewart, who was the wife of William Lord Ruthven, the first Earl of Gowrie, and mother to the unfortunate

John Earl of Gowrie. The subject is of importance in any inquiry relating to what is called "The Gowrie Conspiracy," and, in discussing it, some particulars of information may occur, gratifying to a lover of the ancient history of our country.

All writers agree, that the lady was the daughter, or grand-daughter, of Henry Stewart the first Lord Methven. But the point of controversy is, whether she was descended from him by his first, or by his second wife. Lord Methven's first wife, was Margaret Tudor, queen dowager of Scotland, eldest daughter of King Henry VII. of England, widow of James IV. and mother of James V. Kings of Scotland. His second wife was Lady Janet Stewart, daughter of John the second Earl of Athole, who was killed at the battle of Flowdon, in 1513.

If Dorothea was Lord Methven's daughter, by his first wife, then her son, John Earl of Gowrie, bore a near affinity to the crown of England; if she was his daughter, by his second wife, then her son, as a descendant from the Stewarts, Earls of Atholl, was allied to the royal family of Scotland.

Annexed to the Edinburgh MS. mentioned in my List of Tracts, are some lines of poetry, which,

though they are not very elegantly written, deserve to be here transcribed, as they shew the opinion which long and generally prevailed, that John Earl of Gowrie had a right, even better than that of King James VI. to succeed to the crown of England. The favourers of the court, and enemies to the memory of the Earl of Gowrie, contended, that the Earl's consciousness of this right was a spur to his ambition, and induced him to attempt an act of treason. The other party contended, that the general notion of it, occasioned a dangerous jealousy of him in the mind of King James VI. who, during the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, was looking forward, with anxiety, to the possession of the English crown.

The lines may have been written about the time of the death of King Charles I. and they are as follows:

"King James slew Gowrie, justly bore the blame,
King James slew Gowrie, without wit or shame.
His brothers captives close kept in the tower;
And while they liv'd, ne'er slept a quiet hour.
Queen Margaret's grandson, nigher in degree,
Was Gowrie's ruin, and King James' plea.
His coward heart made him be false to all,
Be justly hated, and his house to fall.

The claims of the crown of England, in the year 1600, which was the year in which John Earl of Gowrie was slain, were commonly understood to be as follows:

1. King James the VI. of Scotland, claimed as the great grandson of Queen Margaret.

2. The unfortunate Lady Arabella Stewart, daughter of Charles the last Earl of Lennox, also claimed as the great-grand-daughter of Queen Margaret.

3. The supposed right of John Earl of Gowrie was founded on the belief, that his mother, the Countess of Gowrie, had been the immediate daughter of Queen Margaret; and that therefore, as the grandson of Queen Margaret, he had a nearer propinquity to the English crown than the other two claimants had, who were only her great-grandchildren.

It is proper here to observe, because of a circumstance afterwards to be considered in my account of the life of John Earl of Gowrie, that it was at this time a part of Queen Elizabeth's policy to protect and retain in England the Lady Arabella Stewart, with a design to keep the Scottish king in perpetual fear of offending her, lest he should

provoke her to allow that young lady to be married, and should also nominate her to be the successor to her crown. The lady was safe while Queen Elizabeth lived.

I have not met with any mention of the supposed right of the young Earl of Gowrie, in any of the early church writings, after his death, though there is some reason to think that it was generally credited. To write of it would then have been dangerous, and might have been equally injurious to the characters, both of the king and of the Earl of Gowrie. Even Calderwood, who might have been expected to mention it, is silent on the subject. But I have found an intimation, which was prior to that period, of an acknowledged affinity between Queen Elizabeth and the Gowrie family.

I lately had in my hands a collection of transcripts from the State Paper Office of London. One of them contains an account of a conversation which was carried on by Queen Mary with John Somer, an English Gentleman, who was conducting her from one prison to another. The unhappy Queen gave some free advices, which she wished her conductor would communicate to his own sove-

reign. The date is not mentioned in the copy; but one of the advices was, that the English Queen should seek and cultivate the friendship of the Lord Ruthven, (that is, of William Lord Ruthven, who was afterwards the first Earl of Gowrie,) which she might hope easily to obtain, "because of the affinity which he bore to her."

Queen Margaret had been Queen Elizabeth's aunt. Therefore, if Lord Ruthven's wife, Dorothea Stewart, was the immediate daughter of Queen Margaret, she was Elizabeth's first cousin. But Mr. Crawfurd, and others of his persuasion, might have alleged, that Queen Mary's words did not imply so near an affinity; that she only meant that Lord Ruthven's Lady was a descendant of the first Lord Methven, who, while he lived, was Queen Elizabeth's uncle-in-law, as being the third husband of her aunt Queen Margaret.

Mr. Crawfurd, in his "Lives of the Officers of State," acknowledges, that all the time in which Bishop Burnet lived in Scotland, the story of the royal parentage of Dorothea Stewart was universally believed.* I shall mention one remarkable

* Page 66.

proof of its having been believed in the reign of Charles II.

William Drummond, Viscount of Strathallan, collected the materials of his MS. history of the Drummonds in the year 1681. He died in the year 1688. The copy of his MS. belonging to the Perth Literary and Antiquarian Society, bears this attestation: "This copied from the original MS. by Mr. David Drummond, Advocate, anno 1689."

The Viscount, when speaking of William the first Earl of Gowrie, says, "His lady was Dorothea Stewart, daughter to the Lord Meffen, begotten on the body of Queen Margaret, Regent in 1515, who was divorced from Archibald Earl of Angus."* Indeed, some person, into whose hands the MS. had happened to fall, very rudely, with regard to his Lordship, interlined these words: "'Tis false! for the Queen had no living child to Lord Methven." But that person was mistaken, as will afterwards appear.

When the abdication of King James VII. was declared in the year 1689, what is now only a matter of historical amusement became the subject of

* Drummond's MS. p. 41.

a keen dispute between two political parties. The friends of "the Revolution," in their opposition to the doctrine of indefeasible hereditary right, zealously maintained that John Earl of Gowrie had a nearer affinity to the English crown than was that of King James VI.; and that therefore, as his claim was rejected, it was no new thing to set aside one heir to the crown, and to chuse another. The friends of the exiled king thought it necessary to shew an equal degree of zeal, in defence of their own particular tenet; and therefore endeavoured to prove, that John Earl of Gowrie had no right at all to the crown of England, though many of them before had been of a contrary opinion.

George Mackenzie, Earl of Cromarty, with the assistance of George Crawfurd of Drumsoy, who, he says, was a young gentleman laudably employed in drawing up an account of the peers of Scotland, warmly engaged in the controversy. He published his book at Edinburgh, "On the Conspiracies of the Earls of Gowrie," in the year 1713, and dedicated it to Queen Anne. The remarks which he made on the supposed right of John Earl of Gowrie, I think it best to give in his Lordship's own words.

He observes, that "it has often been suggested by historians and others, with a design to embarrass the line of the royal succession, that Henry Lord Methven had, by Queen Margaret of Scotland, and sister to King Henry VIII., several children, whose descendants were among the lowest of the people in and about Perth."—"Queen Margaret left no children by Henry Lord Methven."—"The design they" (viz. the historians and others) "had in making Queen Margaret to have had other children to Lord Methven, was to insinuate that this Dorothy, who was married to William Earl of Gowrie, had been a daughter to Queen Margaret, and consequently that John Earl of Gowrie was moved to murder King James, because King James being dead, then John Earl of Gowrie would be grand-child to Queen Margaret, and so nearest heir to the crown of England by his grandmother Queen Margaret. Yea, so far did this comment prevail, that people fancied several other children to have been left by Queen Margaret: and this fable was carried on so far, that some did advance, in their hatred and contempt of the royal family, by supposing a shoemaker in Perth to be

one of those who were descended from Queen Margaret; and this the zealots, since the Revolution, did piously propagate." *

Lord Cromarty was eighty-three years of age when his book was published, and he died the next year. He is the first writer whom I have met with who asserted, though he did it without assigning any authority, that the Countess of Gowrie was Lord Methven's daughter by his second wife, Lady Janet Stewart, daughter of the Earl of Athole.

Mr. George Crawfurd went on in his Historical Researches, and in 1720 published his book of the Peerage of Scotland, in which he did not neglect to take notice of the controversy about the parentage of Dorothea Stewart. He asserted, but without assigning any document or authority whatsoever, that Queen Margaret "had no child to Lord Methven, save one who died an infant before herself." He proved, by an authentic charter, that Lord Methven's second wife was Lady Janet Stewart, daughter to the second Earl of Athole; but for no other reason, mentioned by him, than

* Cromarty, pp. 10, 11, 12.

that Lord Methven had taken a second wife, he affirmed that Dorothea Stewart was descended from Lord Methven by this his second wife.*

Mr. Crawfurd was justly celebrated for his genealogical knowledge; and, after the affirmation of a person of his character, he and his friends, Mr. Ruddiman and others, seemed to think that there would be no farther dispute about the parentage of the Countess of Gowrie. But in the year 1724, appeared the first volume of Bishop Burnet's History of his own Times. A paragraph, written by him in his introduction to his history, furnished new strength and encouragement to the numerous party who were still attached to the old opinion.

The Bishop's words are: "Queen Margaret, after her divorce from the Earl of Angus, married one Francis Stewart, and had by her a son, who was made Lord Methven by King James V. In the Patent he is called "Frater noster Uterinus," (our maternal brother.) He had only a daughter, who was mother, or grandmother, to the Earl of Gowrie; so that, by this, he might be glad to put the

* Crawfurd's Peerage, p. 329.

king out of the way, that he might stand nearest in the succession to the crown of England." *

But the good Bishop, it is generally allowed, often trusted to his memory, and did not carefully examine the grounds of the anecdotes he narrated. Lord Herbert, in his History of King Henry VIII., and all other writers who have mentioned Queen Margaret's third marriage, agree in saying that the name of her third husband was Henry; that he was the second son of Andrew Stewart, Lord Evandale and Ochiltree; and that it was her husband, and not their son, who was created Lord Methven.

It is, however, to be noticed, that the Bishop does not speak of the Countess of Gowrie as having been the immediate daughter, but in a more remote degree the descendant of Queen Margaret: Also, that he does not say that he himself had seen the patent of the peerage of Methven; and therefore, I suspect that with regard to the patent he was misinformed, or did not exactly remember what he had heard; and that what he calls "the patent,"

* Burnet. Small edition, vol. i. p. 24.

was only a charter granted on some particular occasion to the Master of Methven, Queen Margaret's son, who was killed at the battle of Pinkey in 1547. King James V., in granting a charter to this young man, could properly call him "Frater noster uterinus," our uterine brother, or the son of our mother.

It could not be expected in the first half of the last century, when parties were keen on both sides, that the Bishop would meet with no reply. Crawfurd, in his Lives of the Officers of State, published in the year 1726, treated the Bishop's assertion as "a mere fiction." He acquits him indeed of any intention to embarrass the Royal succession, or to reflect on the memory of King James VI. "No," says he, "do the Bishop justice. Till of late, the thing as he has it, was generally believed to be so, and, upon the common report, in the memory of many yet living, a person of mean character and condition, upon the supposition of his royal descent that way, of a daughter of the Lord Methven's, was enquired after, and I think provided for by some who had the nearest relation to the King's service. While the Bishop lived in Scotland, every body believed the thing then, and

it has only been disproved of late." Mr. Crawfurd also says: "It is plain beyond the possibility of any objection to the contrary, that the Queen Dowager had never any issue of her third marriage, so far as I could ever see, and I was as exact in the scrutiny as I could be."* Thereby he declared, he was now persuaded that Queen Margaret never had any children to Lord Methven, which was contrary to the opinion he had formerly expressed in his book of the peerage. But he gave, what was very acceptable, a pretty large detail of a charter granted to Henry the first Lord Methven, to his wife Lady Janet Stewart, and to their son Henry, of the barony of Methven, and other lands, dated at Edinburgh, October 17, 1551; from which it appears, that the first Lord Methven was then alive, and that his son Henry, by Lady Janet Stewart, had been born, who afterwards became the second Lord Methven.†

Principal Robertson, in his History of Scotland, when treating of the Gowrie conspiracy, relieved himself from the trouble of genealogical investigation, by referring to Crawfurd's peerage, and ac-

* Lives of the Officers of State, page 66.

† Ibidem.

quiescing in the opinion therein expressed, viz. that " Lord Methven had only one child by Queen Margaret, who died in its infancy."* Principal Robertson's history was first published in 1759.

Having thus given what I think is a pretty complete history of the controversy which was formerly considered as being of a political kind, I shall now proceed to shew, first, that Queen Margaret had a son to Lord Methven, who lived till he had arrived at man's estate; and, secondly, that it may be reckoned a thing naturally impossible that Dorothea Stewart, the Countess of Gowrie, should have been the immediate daughter of Queen Margaret.

1. I am to shew, from what I esteem good historical evidence, that Queen Margaret had a son to Lord Methven, who survived her, and had arrived before his death at man's estate.

John Lesly, Bishop of Ross, was well acquainted with the Lords of Methven, and with the Lords of Ruthven. He could not possibly be mistaken in any material circumstance concerning them. In his book " De Rebus gestis Scotorum," printed at Rome in the year 1578, when giving an account of

* Robertson, 8vo. Edition in 1802, vol. ii. page 259.

the battle of Pinkey, which was fought, Saturday September 10, 1547, he says what I shall translate as follows: "In that battle eight thousand Scots were slain, some of them of the prime nobility. Lord Fleming was slain. The following sons and heirs of noblemen, whom we call masters (Filii Hæredes quos Magistros vocamus,) also were slain, viz. the Master of Livingston; the Master of Ogilvy; the Master of Evandale; the Master of *Methven*; the Master of Ruthven; and the Master of Ross*."

David Hume of Godscroft, who was a confidential friend of William the first Earl of Gowrie, and also well acquainted with the family of Methven, when giving an account, in his history of the Douglasses, of the battle of Pinkey, mentions in his list of the sons of noblemen slain, the *Master* of *Methven*†.

It appears strange that Mr. Crawfurd should have overlooked or concealed these testimonies. But Bishop Keith, whose history was published in 1739, disregarding the silence of Mr. Crawfurd, honestly

* Lessly, page 464.

† Edinburgh Edition in the year 1644, page 273.

mentions the Master of Methven, as having been one of those who were slain at the battle of Pinkey*.

Mr. Duncan Stewart, in his history of the Stewarts, published in the same year with Bishop Keith's History, does indeed say, but without referring to any authority, that the first Lord Methven, was killed at the battle of Pinkey, thereby intimating that it was the father, and not the son, who was killed at that battle†. In this unfounded assertion, he was followed by Douglas, in his Peerage of Scotland, published in 1764‡. But if these two writers had consulted the sixty-sixth page of Crawfurd's Lives of the Officers of State, they would have seen detailed the substance of a Royal charter, which proves that Henry the first Lord Methven was alive, September 1551, which was four years after the date of the battle of Pinkey.

The Master of Methven, killed in 1547, could have been no other than a son of Queen Margaret, by the first Lord Methven. She died October 25, 1541, and therefore, in September, 1547, no son of

* Keith, page 54.

† Stewart's History, page 122.

‡ Douglas's Peerage, page 477.

Lord Methven by a second wife, could have been of an age sufficient for him to go to battle.

Now, if the Master of Methven was married before his death, which he most probably was, as he must have been born about the year 1525, or perhaps sooner, he may have been the father of Dorothea Stewart, who may have been born about the time of her father's death, and whom the old Lord Methven would justly consider as his own daughter, and might give to her the name of Dorothea, that is, "the gift of God."

I am not authorised to say positively that this was exactly the case, but I think it is highly probable; and that it is a supposition much to be preferred to Mr. Crawfurd's undocumented assertion. It accounts for the long received opinion of the Countess of Gowrie being a descendant from Queen Margaret. It throws some light on the pedigree mentioned by Bishop Burnet. It well accounts for the inflexible adherence of the Gowrie family to the English party in Scotland; for the jealousy which the King entertained of John Earl of Gowrie; and for the avidity which the Scottish nobles shewed, of being married to the daughters of Dorothea Stewart.

2. It has happened, that I can bring forward an authentic document, to shew that it may be reckoned a thing naturally impossible, that Dorothea Stewart should have been the immediate daughter of Queen Margaret. In the parish register of Perth, which bears this title, "The names of them that were married in Perth, since the last of October in anno 1560," is the following record, "August 17, 1561, William Ruthven and Dorothe Stewart." The word "Lord" is interlined, making the record thus to be read, "William Lord Ruthven and Dorothe Stewart." But William ought more strictly to have been denominated "Master of Ruthven," for his father Patrick Lord Ruthven was then alive. Though designations are seldom to be met with in that old register, if Dorothea had been the immediate daughter of a Queen, so extraordinary a circumstance, I scarcely can think would have been unnoticed.

Patrick Lord Ruthven died in the year 1566, when he was forty-six years of age.* Therefore at the time of his son's marriage, he was only forty-one years of age, and the age of his son could not

* Keith's Appendix, page 119.

exceed twenty or twenty-one years. It is most reasonable to suppose, that William, the Master of Ruthven, would marry a Lady about his own age, and not one who was thirteen or fourteen years older than himself, which Dorothea, if the immediate daughter of Queen Margaret, would then have been. That such would have been her age, will be ascertained in my account of Queen Margaret, given in my third dissertation.

That the lady was very young at the time of her marriage with the Master of Ruthven, is evident also from this fact, that, within the space of twenty-three years, she bore to her husband five sons, and seven or eight daughters, and was continuing to bear children when her husband, in 1584, was beheaded at Stirling. This would not have been the case with her if she had been the immediate daughter of Queen Margaret; but, as I said before, she may have been the daughter of Margaret's son, the Master of Methven, who was killed at the battle of Pinkey.

I purpose to offer afterwards some family statements, which may serve for the farther illustration of the present subject of discussion.

It may be proper for me now to give a character of the Countess of Gowrie, and to mention her misfortunes. In as far as can now be known, she was a useful friend to true religion, as her husband also was. She does not seem to have meddled with the public affairs of the kingdom, but to have directed her attention to her domestic concerns, as the mother of many children. Such writers as take notice of her pass no censure upon her conduct, but speak of her with sympathy and respect.

In the latter part of her life, she met with severe trials. The Earl, her husband, was beheaded at Stirling, May 4th, 1584. The family titles and estates were then forfeited. Hume of Godscroft tells us, that "the Countess was at that time basely and beastly used. She was a Stewart of the house of Methven, but to her and to her children they" (viz. the courtiers) "shewed no respect at all, but treated her with all incompassionate rigour and cruelty; for she, having come to intreat for herself and her children, while the Parliament was sitting, and having fallen down upon her knees before the king, was trodden under foot, and left lying in a swoon*."

* Hist. Douglasses, p 387.

The family titles and estates were, however, restored at the end of next year, and she still had comfort in observing the pious dispositions of her sons, and in having her daughters, from time to time, well and honourably married.

In 1588, she lost James, her eldest son, who was the second Earl of Gowrie. He was a youth of great hopes, and died when he was fourteen years of age. Her two next sons, John the third Earl, and his brother Alexander, were, August 5th, 1600, slain at Perth under an imputation, which must have been very distressing to her. Her second daughter, the Duchess of Lennox, wife of Ludovick Stewart, when told of the death of her two brothers at Perth, and the circumstances of it, went distracted, and soon after died, without seeming to have recovered the use of her reason.*

The Gowrie titles and estates were then finally forfeited. The dead bodies of the Earl and his brother were ignominiously hanged on a gibbet at the cross of Edinburgh. Their quarters afterwards were sent to Perth and other three towns; and Crawfurd unfeelingly says, "Their heads were af-

* Stewart's Coll. MS.

fixed to the jail at Edinburgh, there to remain till the wind should blow them off." *

The Countess had yet two other sons, William and Patrick, who, being yet very young, resided with her at her jointure house of Dirleton in East Lothian. They fled immediately into England, and the Parliament of Scotland forfeited them of all their property and right of heritage, and pronounced them exiles from their native country. Calderwood relates, " On the evening of the sixth of August, 1600, the Master of Orkney and Sir James Sandilands, with some horsemen, rode to Dirleton, to apprehend the two young brothers of the Earl of Gowrie, William and Patrick. But they had escaped half an hour before, having been advertised, by a person of the name of Kennedy, of the danger they were in. The Countess carried herself soberly, till it was said that no evil should betide her sons, and that they would only be committed to the custody of the Earl of Montrose, the chancellor of the kingdom. She then burst forth into these words, (speaking in the old Scottish dialect), " Ah ! ah ! fawse (false) traitor, thief, shall

* Peerage, p. 166.

my bairns come in his hands*?" He had been one of the jury, who, at Stirling, had condemned her husband to death.

It is, however, to be noticed, that one of her daughters had been before married to Lord Graham, the son and heir of this Earl of Montrose, which Lady was the mother of the famous Marquis of Montrose.

I have not learned how long the Countess of Gowrie continued to live after the year 1600. She might now be about sixty years of age. Her unmarried daughter, Lady Beatrix Ruthven, seems to have lived with her some little time; but about the year 1603, was married to Sir John Hume of Coldingknows, ancestor of the present Earls of Hume. I do not forbear to add, that this Lady Coldingknows, in the latter part of her life, became remarkably pious, and was distinguished for her religious zeal. She shewed, as might have been expected, her antipathy to King James VI., though she was the favourite of his queen. She reprobated the measures he was taking with regard to the Scottish church, and patronised and afforded fre-

* Cald. MS.

quent relief to the persecuted Presbyterian ministers*.

* Livingston's Memoirs, MS. in my possession, which contains some particulars not inserted in the printed copies.

III.

FAMILY STATEMENTS.

I. QUEEN MARGARET.

CONTENTS.

Her Birth. Married to King James IV. Her Marriage with the Earl of Angus. Divorces the Earl. Marries Henry Stewart, who is created Lord Methven. The Barony of Methven conferred on her and her Husband. Their Residence in the Castle of Methven. Their Children. She is visited by Sir Ralph Sadler. Her Character, Death, and Burial. A Stone in the north-east corner of the East Church of Perth.

MARGARET TUDOR, eldest daughter of King Henry VII. of England, and of his Queen Elizabeth Plantagenet, was born November 20th, 1489. When she was nearly fourteen years of age, she was married August 7th, 1503, in the Palace of Holyrood-

house at Edinburgh, to King James IV. of Scotland, by whom she was mother to King James V. and to other three children, who died in their infancy.

Her husband was killed at the battle of Flowdon, September 9th, 1513, but she did not continue a widow fully eleven months; for, August 4th, 1514, when she was nearly twenty-four years of age, she was married to Archibald Douglas, commonly called the Great Earl of Angus. In consequence of this marriage, she was soon set aside from being regent of the kingdom, but was still ambitious of retaining in her hands her infant son, King James V. and of exercising a supereminent power in all public matters.

We are told by the Lord Viscount Strathallan, in his MS. history of the Drummonds, that the match between the Queen and the Earl of Angus was chiefly promoted by John, the first Lord Drummond, and that the nuptial ceremony was performed in the parish church of Kinnoull by Lord Drummond's brother, Mr. Walter Drummond, Parson of Kinnoull, and Dean of Dumblane. Also, that, through the envy and jealousy of some of the nobility, the Earl of Angus was cited to appear be-

fore the Privy Council, to answer for his having been so ambitious as to marry the Queen Dowager, who had been acting as regent of the kingdom. A person, who was accusing the Earl, spoke of him so disrespectfully, that Lord Drummond, in the presence of the Council, was provoked to give the accuser a box on the ear; and the new regent, the Duke of Albany, to gratify some of the nobility, committed Lord Drummond to the Castle of Blackness, where he remained a prisoner till he was liberated at the powerful intercession of his friends.*

October 7th, 1515, Queen Margaret bore to the Earl of Angus, Lady Margaret Douglas, who lived to be Countess of Lennox, and mother to Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley, the second husband of Queen Mary of Scotland.

In 1516, Queen Margaret discorded with the Earl of Angus, and separated herself from him. Her displeasure against him was so great, that she joined the party who were endeavouring to diminish his influence in the kingdom. She sought to be divorced from him, and wished to be at liberty to marry another husband. Her pretence was, that

* MS. History of the Drummonds, p. 40.

the Earl had been previously married to Margaret Stewart, a daughter of the Baron of Traquair. By this lady the Earl of Angus had, indeed, a daughter, Lady Jean Douglas, who was afterwards married to Patrick Lord Ruthven.

King Henry VIII. of England opposed his sister's desire; but she persevered in using means to procure the divorce. She had placed her affection on Henry Stewart, second son of Andrew Lord Evandale and Ochiltree. She solicited favours in behalf of this young man, and succeeded in obtaining for him the offices of Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the King her son, of General of the Artillery, and of Director of the Chancery*. Almost from the time that she had separated herself from the Earl of Angus, she seems to have considered this Henry Stewart as her husband; but their voluntary and illegal connection was more openly acknowledged in 1524, after the Consistorial Court of St. Andrew's had passed a sentence, dissolving her former marriage with the Earl of Angus. It was not, however, till the year 1528 that the Pope's bull arrived, confirming the sen-

* Duncan Stewart's History of the Stewarts, p. 121.

tence of the Bishop's Court of St. Andrew's, and she was then about forty years of age.

It is generally remarked, that this Queen Dowager of Scotland was, like her brother King Henry VIII. changeable in her affections. Several practices were undoubtedly shamefully tolerated in the popish times. But there is no evidence of any estrangement of her affection from Henry Stewart, her third husband.

Her son, King James V., who was born in April, 1512, was now about fifteen years of age, and had taken the government upon himself. She obtained from him lands in behalf of her husband, and also the dignity of the peerage. A part of her jointure, as Queen Dowager of Scotland, was the lordship and castle of Stirling. This part she gave up to the crown, in exchange for the lands and barony of Methven and Balquhidder in the county of Perth. Crawfurd, in his Lives of the Officers of State, quotes a charter, dated at Edinburgh, July 17th, 1528, in which the King grants and confirms to his mother Queen Margaret, and to her husband Henry Stewart, brother german to that Andrew, who was then Lord Evandale, and to the longest liver of them two, and to their heirs

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and assignees whatsoever, the whole lands and barony of Methven and Balquhidder. * And Duncan Stewart, in his History of the Families of the surname of Stewart, says, that the King granted a royal patent, dated September 5th, 1528, to the foresaid Henry Stewart, raising him to the dignity of the peerage by the title of Lord Methven. † I would have found it very acceptable in my present inquiry, if Mr. Crawfurd and Mr. Stewart had given full copies of these two charters.

The Queen and her husband had afterwards their usual residence in the Castle of Methven, near Perth, which was near also to the Castle of Ruthven, the original family seat of the lords of Ruthven. Lord Strathallan informs us, that the name of this seat of the lords of Ruthven was judicially changed to that of Huntingtower, when the Gowrie estates were forfeited, and given away to the King's favourites in the year 1600. ‡ A friendly intimacy long subsisted between the noble and neighbouring families of Methven and

* Crawfurd's Lives, p. 66.

† History of the Stewarts, p. 122.

‡ MS. History of the Drummonds, p. 65.

Ruthven, which was increased and confirmed from time to time by their marriage alliances.

It would be too much to suppose, as Crawfurd has done, that the Queen had before had no children who were afterwards legitimated to Lord Methven. It can scarcely be thought that she bore any children after the year 1529; but I have shewed, in the preceding dissertation, that, at the early period, she had at least one child, the Master of Methven, who was killed at the battle of Pinkey, Sept 10th, 1547. And I have suggested it as an opinion highly probable, and to be preferred to all others, that this Master of Methven was the father of Dorothea Stewart, Countess of Gowrie; and that, consequently, John Earl of Gowrie was the great-grand-son of Queen Margaret, and thereby had a near affinity to the crown of England. If the old writs of the lords of Methven, or if an inventory of them be now extant in any family repository, by consulting these writs, or that inventory, an end might be put at once to the doubts, and conjectures, and painful researches of those antiquaries who are curious of such matters.

Queen Margaret, even to the end of her life, seems to have been desirous of taking an active

concern in all the public transactions. She was grieved when she found herself disregarded by the contending parties. When Sir Ralph Sadler, the English ambassador, arrived at Edinburgh in February, 1539–40, she was in her winter apartments in the Palace of Holyroodhouse, and appears to have been dispirited, and in an infirm state of health. The ambassador had, among other things, been instructed by his master, King Henry VIII., "to visit the old Queen, and to let her know how desirous he was to hear of her health and prosperity." But Sir Ralph, when he waited upon her, had no letter to deliver, and this she felt to be an unkind neglect. Her reply to him was, "Though I be forgotten in England, never shall I forget England. It would have been but a small matter to have spent a little paper and ink upon me, and much would it have been to my comfort. Were it perceived that the King's Grace, my brother, did regard me, I should be the better regarded of all parties here."*

It is said by some, that she died that same year, viz. in 1540. But I would prefer the date of her

* Sadler's Letters. Edition 1720, p. 14, 50.

death, as it is given in Fleming and Mercer's MS. chronicle in my possession, where it is said, "In 1541, Queen Margaret, mother of King James V., deceased on St. Marnoch's day," (viz. October 25th,) in Methven, and was buried in the charter-house beside Perth, the King's Majesty, nobility, and barons being present." All writers concur in saying, that she was buried in the royal sepulchre, in the church of the Charter-House, or Carthusian Monastery, at Perth, near to the bodies of King James I. and Jean his queen, the founders of that monastery. At the time of her death, she had lived fifty-two years, eleven months, and five days.

Her brother, King Henry VIII., was an original promoter of the Reformation, especially in what related to the government of the church; but he still professed to believe most of the doctrinal articles of the Church of Rome. The lords of Methven, and of Ruthven, were well affected to the doctrines of the Reformers. It can scarcely be supposed that Queen Margaret publicly favoured, or had become a convert to what were then called the new opinions. She could not, however, be ignorant of them; and it may be hoped that they

may have had some salutary influence in regulating the dispositions of her mind, and her after private conduct. Indeed, excepting in the affair of her divorce from the Earl of Angus, I have met with no censure of her moral character. She seems to have been a woman of great mental abilities, and shewed her dexterity in managing contending parties immediately after the death of her first husband King James IV.

The stone which lay over the bodies in the royal sepulchre seems to be that large blue marble stone which is now situated in the pavement in the north-east corner of the east church of Perth. It appears to have been brought for preservation to the parish church, in the year 1559, when the Carthusian Monastery was demolished. It consists of two compartments, at the top of each of which is a regal crown, certified to be of the royal kind, by its containing the *Fleurs de Lys*. The stone has, as yet, no covering provided for it, and therefore its engravings continue to be daily injured by the feet of the people who tread upon it. Soon after it had been brought to the parish church, some of the Gowrie family appear to have been in-

terred under it, particularly the body of James, the second Earl of Gowrie, who died in 1588.*

2. LADY JANET STEWART,

DAUGHTER OF JOHN STEWART, SECOND EARL OF ATHOLL.

CONTENTS.

Her Birth. Her four Husbands. Divorces her second Husband, Hugh Kennedy. Marries Lord Methven. Marries Patrick Lord Ruthven. Lords of Methven.

Her father was killed at the battle of Flowdon, September 9th, 1513. She seems to have possessed qualities uncommonly attractive; and as George Crawfurd of Drumsoy, historiographer to Queen Anne, and Sir Robert Douglas, in their books of the peerage of Scotland, have asserted that this Lady Janet Stewart was the mother of Dorothea Stewart, Countess of Gowrie, though I do not think

* Minutes of the Kirk Session of Perth, February 25th, 1637.

that they have proved their assertion, it may be proper that I should give some account of her. She is said to have been successively married to four husbands.

1. Her first husband was Alexander Gordon, Master of Sutherland. Gordon was at that time the family surname. He did not live to succeed to the earldom, but died in the year 1529. As she is said to have had by him five children, she may be supposed to have been born in 1504, and married when she was about fifteen years of age. The first of her children, when the Master of Sutherland died, could only have been about eight years old, and she herself may have been in the twenty-fifth year of her age.

2. Her second husband was Hugh Kennedy of Girvan-mains, a descendant of the earls of Cassilis. By him she had some children, particularly a daughter, Elizabeth Kennedy, of whom I will have occasion afterwards to speak.

3. A divorce having taken place about the year 1544 between her and her husband Hugh Kennedy, the causes of which I have not found mentioned, she was married to Henry Stewart, the first Lord Methven, whose first wife, Queen Margaret,

had died in the year 1541. There is abundant evidence, that Lady Janet Stewart, and her husband Lord Methven, were living together, October 10th, 1551, and that they had then a son, Henry, who afterwards was the second Lord Methven*. But there is no other evidence than Mr. Crawfurd's bold assertion, and fond conjecture, that this Lady Methven was the mother of Dorothea Stewart.

4. Lord Methven seems to have died about the year 1554. His widow, then about fifty years of age, was married to Patrick, third Lord Ruthven, who had not then attained his fortieth year. Douglas has said that she had a son, James, by Lord Ruthven, who, in 1582, was Presenter of Dunkeld. But I will afterwards have occasion to shew that this James was not her son, but Lord Ruthven's son, by his first wife, Lady Jean Douglas.

Old Lady Ruthven, viz. Lady Janet Stewart, seems to have been alive in the year 1566. I have seen nothing to disprove her identity in the four marriages above mentioned. She must have possessed some quality peculiarly captivating, which induced Patrick Lord Ruthven to marry a Lady

* Crawfurd's Lives of the Officers of State, p. 66.

so much older than himself. He was a religious man, and a zealous Protestant, and the same character, with regard to religion, may have also belonged to her.

Among the loose papers, now lying in the old vassal book of the monastery of Scoon, there is a brief inventory of some curious writs which were engrossed in what is called "the second book of Mr. Walter Ramsay's Prothocoll." I shall transcribe the words of one of the last articles in that inventory.

"In the 100 leaf, Hugh Kennedy of Girvanmains' ratification of the sentence of divorcement pronounced against him, at the instance of Janet Stewart, of the Master of Ruthven, of Lord and Lady Meffen, at Meffen Castle, September 29, 1546. This by an decreet-arbitral pronounced betwixt them by Gilbert, Earl of Cassillis. He also in the next leaf, makes the bairns begotten betwixt him and the said Dame Jean Stewart, assigneys to his goods and gear."

In the last part of the paragraph, "Jean" seems to have been inadvertently written, instead of "Jane," or "Janet." I take it for granted, that Dame, that is, Lady Janet Stewart was now, in

1546, the Lady of Lord Methven, and I apprehend the article in the inventory may be thus explained. Some time previous to the above date, Janet Stewart had procured herself to be legally divorced from her husband Hugh Kennedy. But after she had been married to Lord Methven, she prosecuted Hugh Kennedy to make a sufficient provision for the children which she had by him. In this process she was aided, not only by her present husband Lord Methven, but also by Patrick, Master of Ruthven, who was now twenty-six years of age. Both parties submitted the matter in dispute to Hugh Kennedy's cousin, Gilbert, the third Earl of Cassillis. The Earl, by his decreet, and by their acquiescence in it, established the justness of the divorce which had taken place, and obliged Hugh Kennedy to make provision for the children ; which he accordingly did in another writ, by declaring "the bairns assigneys to his goods and gear." I suppose the expression meant, his moveable effects.

We find, that some years after the Lady had married her fourth husband Patrick Lord Ruthven, Queen Mary, in the year 1566, thought proper to twit him with his having married a lady, who

had once been divorced from her husband. On the evening after David Rizzio's death, the King, (Lord Darnly,) and Lord Ruthven, remained in the Queen's chamber, and had a long conversation with her. Among other speeches she said to Lord Darnly, "Well, you have taken your last of me, and your farewell." "Then were pity," Lord Ruthven replied, "for he is your Majesty's husband, and ye must yield duty to each other." "Why may not I," said she, "leave him, as well as your wife did her husband? Others have done the like." The Lord Ruthven said, that "she, (his wife) was lawfully divorced from her husband, and for no such cause as that for which the King (Lord Darnly) found himself aggrieved*."

I have now, further, to add some particulars of family history, which are certified in the old parish registers of Perth. On the same day in which William, Master of Ruthven, who was old Lady Ruthven's step-son, was married to Dorothea Stewart, she had the satisfaction to see her daughter by Hugh Kennedy also married; for thus the marriage record bears, "August 17, 1561, Patrick

* Robertson's Appendix, Number 15.

Vans, and Elizabeth Kennedy." I apprehend this gentleman was Sir Patrick Vans of Bandury.

Not very many years afterwards, the old Lady's own son, Henry Stewart, the second Lord Methven, was married to her step-daughter Jean Ruthven. With regard to this her son, I find the following particulars in the baptism and burial registers. In the record of the baptism of Catherine, a daughter of William Lord Ruthven, February 27, 1571-2, one of the witnesses or god-fathers mentioned, is "Harry Lord Meffen," and then is added the following memorandum; "My Lord Meffen was slain by an gun out of the Castle of Edinburgh, the fourth day thereafter." His death and burial are thus stated in the Perth burial register: "Third day of March, Harry Stewart, Lord Meffen, was slain with an gun out of the Castle of Edinburgh, and was brought to Perth in an boat of Leith, and was conveyed to Meffen to be buried there, the twenty-first day of March, in anno 71 years." That is, according to the present way of reckoning the beginning of the year, March 21, 1572.

This Lord Methven had a good character, and Spottiswood says, "His death was greatly lamented by both parties." Though he was not much

above twenty-two years of age, he had joined with his wife's brother William Lord Ruthven, and the other patriotic Lords, who were maintaining the cause of the infant King, James VI. against the restoration of his mother Queen Mary. The Queen's party kept for sometime possession of the Castle of Edinburgh, which was besieged by the opposite party, and the Captain, or Governor of the Castle, was Sir William Kirkaldy of Grange.

There was a third Lord Methven, Henry, who was the son of the former Lord. He is said to have died without issue, and seems to have lost his estates, or to have sold them some time before his death; for, according to Duncan Stewart, in his history of the Stewarts, King James VI. in 1584, conferred the lordship of Methven and Balquhidder in the shire of Perth, upon his own cousin Ludovick Stewart, Duke of Lennox*.

* Page 122.

3. LORDS OF RUTHVEN.

CONTENTS.

Old Copy of a Retour sent in 1789 by the Old Laird of Achalader. William First Lord Ruthven. Date of his Peerage. A Friend to King James III. The Family Coat of Arms. A Patriotic Ancestor, the Companion of Sir William Wallace. Children of the First Lord Ruthven. The Master of Ruthven, who had been married, killed at the Battle of Flowdon. The Old Lord died in 1528.

William Second Lord Ruthven. His Marriage and an accession to his Estate. His Second Son, Alexander, Ancestor of the Lords Ruthven of Freeland. His Daughter Lillias. His Public Offices. A Friend to the Reformers. His Great House in Perth. He died in 1553.

Patrick Third Lord Ruthven. Born in 1520. Professed the Reformed Religion. While Master of Ruthven commanded the Perth Party at the Battle on the bridge of Tay; was early married to Lady Jean Douglas, who was the Mother of all his Children. His Second Wife was

Lady Janet Stewart, Widow of Henry Lord Methven. Fled into England after the Assassination of David Rizzio, and died there in 1566. His Children. The number and names of his Sons certified by a Charter in the old Vassal Book of Scoon. An Account of his Third Son, Mr. George Ruthven.

William, Fourth Lord Ruthven, and First Earl of Gowrie. Married to Dorothea Stewart. Some of his Public Actions. His Plan of Policy. Created Earl of Gowrie. Is loth to leave the Kingdom, when under a Sentence of Banishment. Enlarges his House at Perth. His Conference with David Hume of Godscroft. Anecdote of the Earl and of Mr. Patrick Galloway. He is seized by Colonel William Stewart, and Tried, and Condemned, and Executed at Stirling. His Character.

To supply omissions, and rectify mistakes of former writers of family history, it is necessary that any new documents produced should be particularly explained.

In the year 1789, old Mr. Campbell of Achalader, who had some fondness for antiquarian researches, sent to me, for inspection, from his family archives, an old writ which he called "a retour," dated in the year 1444. I returned the original paper, together with a transcript I had made of it, and, as was agreeable to him, kept another copy of the transcript for myself.

The inquisition in the retour was taken in the presence of Sir John de Ruthven of that ilk, Sheriff of Perth. He is not mentioned in Douglas' Peerage, but his name should have been therein placed, as the eleventh in the line of ancestry of the Lords of Ruthven. As the paper is not long, and may be interesting to some families, because of the names of the jurors, it may be proper that I should here insert a translation of it from the Latin.

Retour 1444. *Lands of Drumlochy,* THOMAS DE CHALMERS.

TRANSLATION.

" This inquisition was made at Pertht, on the twenty-first day of the month of April, in the year of our Lord one thousand four hundred and forty-four, before Lord *(coram domino)* John de Ruthven of that ilk, *(de eodem)* Knight, Sheriff of Perth, by the persons under written, who were burthened and sworn thereto, by their great oath, to wit, Lords *(Dominis)* David de Murray of Tullibardin, Knight; Andrew de Ogilvy of Inchmartin, Knight; Andrew Gray of Fowlis; Malcolm de Drummond of Stobhall; Alan de Kynnaird of

that ilk; Finlay Ramsay of Banff; Malcolm de Moncrefe of that ilk; Christianus de Gorty; Robert de Erskine; David Galithly; Finlay Butter; Patrick Butter; John Eviot; and Walter de Pitscottie of Loncardy. All sworn.

"It is decerned that the late William de Chalmer, *(de Camera,)* father of Thomas de Chalmer, bearer of these presents, *(Latoris Præsentium,)* died, last vested and duly siezed, in peace and loyalty to our Sovereign Lord the King, (James II.) of the lands of Drumlochy, with their pertinents, lying within the Sheriffdom of Pertht. That the said Thomas is lawful and nearest heir of the said late William his father of the said lands with their pertinents. That he is now of law of lawful age. That the said lands, with their pertinents, now avail (valent) per annum ten merks, and availed in the time of his father one hundred shillings; and that they are held *in capite* of our Sovereign Lord the King, rendering from them annually twelve slings * if it be so required, at the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed John Baptist, in the name

* "Catapulta, a sling, or engine of war, to cast stones or darts." Calapini Dictionarium.

of White Maille Albæ Firmæ. Also, that the lands were in the hands of our Sovereign Lord the King, by the death of the said late William, during the space of one quarter of a year, through the default of the true heir not prosecuting his right.

" In testimony of all which, the seals of some of the said inquisitors are appended to this inquisition, place, day, month, and year above said."

Sir Robert Douglas, by his not having been informed of this old writ, has not only omitted to mention Sir John de Ruthven, Baron of that ilk, and Sheriff of Perth, in his book of the Peerage, but also, in his book of the Baronage, has omitted to mention Sir Andrew de Ogilvy of Inchmartin.

The Barons of Ruthven were raised to the dignity of the peerage by King James III. I refer to Crawfurd and Douglas for information concerning the more remote ancestors of the Ruthven family, and shall confine my brief account to the Lords who bore that title.

1. WILLIAM LORD RUTHVEN.

He was created Lord of Ruthven by King James III. January 29, 1487-8. The King was then residing within the gates and bars of the castle of Edinburgh, which he had newly fortified for his security. His deposition, if not his death, was threatened by a powerful party of the nobility, who were setting up the son against the father. The afflicted King had the comfort to find that Sir William Ruthven of that ilk was one of those who kept by him, and was a true loyalist. He entrusted him with a command in his army; and as a farther testimony of his affectionate regard, and of his confidence in him, raised him to the peerage by the title of Lord Ruthven. The decisive battle was fought, near to Falkirk, June 11, 1488. Lord Ruthven was one of the nobles who commanded in the King's van-guard, but the Royal army was defeated, and the King, having fled, was, in his flight, privately and inhumanly murdered.

I think it is extremely probable that some parts of Lord Ruthven's coat of arms had been devised

by the grateful monarch, and adopted at his recommendation, viz. the upright bars in the shield, representing the strength of the castle of Edinburgh ; and also the man in armour, pointing with his sword to an imperial Crown, with these words, " Tibi soli," meaning, To thy defence only my sword is devoted. It is certain that the coat of arms of John Earl of Gowrie bore these devices, with the general motto, " Facta probant," Deeds shew,—besides the other motto, " Tibi soli*." The crest was then a goat's head, and the supporters were two goats, which Nisbet thinks were introduced when the Lords of Ruthven became Earls of Gowrie, as the word " Gowrie" means " a goat †."

Crawfurd tells us, that he had in his possession an authentic copy of the armorial bearing of John Earl of Gowrie, painted in the year 1597, and richly illuminated, with his name and titles, " Joannes Ruthven, Comes de Gowry, Dominus de Ruthven ‡." He fully describes its different parts, and makes no ungenerous remarks on the figure of the

* Crawfurd's Peerage, page 166.

† Nisbet's Heraldry, vol. i. page 39.

‡ Peerage, page 166.

man in armour, with the motto "Tibi soli." The first, and perhaps the only writer, who has found fault with it, was William Sanderson, Esquire, who wrote his violent book of history more than fifty years after the Earl of Gowrie's death*. King James VI., and his courtiers, considered the Chevalier with the sword as an ancient and honourable part of the arms of the family, otherwise, if they had thought it any proof of the Earl's ambition, they would have zealously made it public to his disadvantage, and to justify themselves. A copy of the arms engraven on a stone, which seems to have been placed above the gate of the Gowrie house at Perth, or at the castle of Ruthven, is still preserved as a relic in the house of Freeland.

William, the first Earl of Gowrie, was one of the chief instruments of preserving the Crown on the head of King James VI., in his non-age, against a powerful party who sought to deprive him of it. I add from Nisbet, that it was no uncommon thing to grant such devices to favoured persons. King Robert Bruce granted to his nephew, Sir Alexander Seton, that he should carry in his coat of arms a sword supporting an imperial Crown. And King

* Sanderson's History, p. 226.

James VI. granted to Dr. Harries, viz. Sir Hugh Harries of Cousland, whom he considered as one of his three friends, who principally assisted him in the bloody affair at Perth, August 5, 1600, that he should have this exterior augmentation to his coat of arms, viz. " a hand in armour, issuing from the right side of the shield, holding a sword supporting an Imperial Crown*."

If I shall be enabled to give, as I hope to do, an account of the life and death of John Earl of Gowrie, I will have occasion to refer to the above observations. I now notice that a predecessor of the first Lord Ruthven had been also a firm supporter of the independency of the Scottish Crown. I shall transcribe my short account of that patriot from what I wrote, in one of those historical dissertations with which I supplied Mr. Morison for his Edition, in 1790, of Henry's Life of Sir William Wallace. " Sir William Ruthven of Ruthven, now called Huntingtower, two miles west from Perth, ancestor of the Lords of Ruthven and Earls of Gowrie, was compelled, along with others, to swear fealty to Edward in the year 1296. Henry says,

* Nisbet, vol. ii. part 3, pages 72, 73.

he was a true Scots patriot. The first time that Perth was besieged by Wallace, Ruthven brought to his assistance thirty brave men, who had tried their weapons against the enemy. He was also with Sir Christopher Seton, in taking Jedburgh from the English, and, with the consent of Wallace, was left Governor there. When a powerful army was gathering, to expel the English from Scotland, Ruthven brought out of Jedburgh a numerous body of Teviotdale men.

"After Wallace's first return from France, Ruthven who had been lurking in Birnam Wood, came to assist at the second siege of Perth. Wallace, Ruthven, and some others, disguised themselves as peasants, and got admission into the town. Wallace, immediately as a reward for his great services, made him Sheriff of Perth, an office which continued to be hereditary in his family. He married Marjory, daughter of the patriotic Sir John Ramsay of Auchterhouse, and died in the year 1320."

It is to be observed, that, at this period, Sir William Wallace was legally acting as Governor of Scotland, under John Baliol, who had renounced his dependence on the English King Edward I.

I have not much more to relate, concerning the first Lord Ruthven. He died in a very advanced age, in the year 1528. His marriages, his children, and the connections they formed, are distinctly arranged in Douglas' Peerage. His daughter Margaret, was mother to Sir John Erskine of Dun, the justly celebrated Reformer, and Ecclesiastical Superintendant of Angus and Mearns. William, Lord Ruthven's eldest son, was killed at the battle of Flowdon, in 1513, but he had before been married, and had several children. Lesly speaks of the Master of Ruthven being killed at the battle of Pinkey in 1547; but in this he was not followed in the lists given by Hume of Godscroft, Keith, and others. He was at the battle of Flowdon when the Master of Ruthven was slain.

2. WILLIAM, SECOND LORD RUTHVEN.

He succeeded his grandfather, the first Lord, in the year 1528. He acquired a great addition to his estate, by his having been married to Jean Halliburton, one of the co-heiresses of Patrick Lord Halliburton of Dirlton in East Lothian. His son

Patrick was afterwards the third Lord Ruthven. His other son, Alexander, was the ancestor of the Lords Ruthven of Freeland. He had seven daughters, one of whom was the celebrated Lilias Ruthven, who was married to David Lord Drummond: She is celebrated by Calderwood in his MSS. for her singular piety and zeal for true religion; and by Lord Strathallan, in his MS. History of the Drummonds, for her "beauty and good breeding."

This Lord Ruthven, for some years before his death, held the office of Lord Privy Seal. He was also hereditary Sheriff of Perth, which office had been confirmed to the family by a special charter to his grandfather. He is sometimes spoken of as being one of the Lords of the reforming congregation. But Calderwood in his MSS. tells us, that he did not openly profess the reformed religion, but approved of what his son Patrick was doing to promote it.

It seems to have been in the year 1527 that he, or his grandfather, purchased from the heirs of the late Elizabeth Gray, Countess Dowager of Huntly, that great house in Perth, situated on the west bank of the river, which that Countess had built,

or rather enlarged*. This house, which, when the square was finished, sometimes had the name of Gowrie's Palace, was famous for the tragical event which happened in it August 5, 1600. It was demolished in the year 1807; but while it stood it was often visited by strangers who were curious of the particulars of the Scottish History.

Lord Ruthven having a house in Perth, and which was only about two miles from the original family seat of the Castle of Ruthven, took an active part in the management of the town. He was first chosen Provost of Perth in 1529, and afterwards he and his son Patrick were often chosen to the said office. He died in the end of the year 1553.

3. PATRICK, THIRD LORD RUTHVEN.

He was born in the year 1520, and succeeded his father in 1553. During the lifetime of his father, he was sometimes Provost of Perth, and, after his father's death, continued to be constantly chosen to that office. He possessed great firmness of

* Rental Books and Papers of King James VI's Hospital of Perth.

mind. His spirited exertions in behalf of the Protestant religion are mentioned by Knox, Spottiswood, Calderwood, and other writers.

Cardinal Beaton, towards the end of his confinement in the castle of St. Andrew's, succeeded in kindling a strife betwixt Andrew the first Lord Gray, and William the second Lord Ruthven, both of whom were favourers of the Reformation. The Cardinal expected that by this strife the influence of these noblemen would be weakened. Patrick, then Master of Ruthven, headed his father's party, and a bloody battle was fought on the bridge at Perth. The date of this battle has been disputed, but besides other reasons to ascertain it, the date is thus fixed in Fleming and Mercer's MS. Chronicle in my possession. It is there said, "The conflict on the brig of Tay happened on the Magdalene day (July 22) 1544."

The first wife of Patrick Lord Ruthven, to whom he was married when a very young man, was Lady Jean Douglas, daughter of the great Earl of Angus, by a daughter of the Baron of Traquair. When Queen Margaret was prosecuting a divorce from this Earl of Angus, who had been her second husband, the Earl confessed before the Archbishop of

St. Andrew's, that, previous to his marriage with the Queen, he had been contracted to the daughter of the Baron of Traquair; the Archbishop therefore pronounced a sentence divorcing the Queen from the Earl, but that it should not in any respect injure the rights and privileges of the child whom the Queen had bore to the said Earl*. The above mentioned Lady Jean Douglas was the mother of all Patrick Lord Ruthven's children.

His second wife was Lady Janet Stewart, who had become a widow by the death of her third husband, Henry Stewart, the first Lord Methven. She was Lord Ruthven's wife in 1557, but I have elsewhere shewed, that she was then too old to have any children.

March 9, 1565-6, Lord Ruthven, who at the time was labouring under a mortal disease, offended Queen Mary by the part which he took, at the desire of Lord Darnly, in the assassination of David Rizzio. He fled into England, where he wrote an account of that affair, and died soon after. He

* Drummond of Hawthorn-Den's History of the 5 Jameses, page 95.

was then forty-six years of age. Keith says, " He died at Newcastle June 13, 1566*.

I am now to rectify Douglas' List of Patrick Lord Ruthven's sons. Instead of three, he had five sons. Their names, and their order of seniority, are ascertained by an authentic charter in the 21st leaf of the Old Vassal Book of Scoon. It is a prolix Latin charter, dated November 16, 1560, that is, after the reformation of religion had been established, and the monastery buildings at Scoon almost totally laid in ruins. The Bishop of Murray, Patrick Hepburn, who was perpetual Commendator of the Abbey, was then giving away its lands in feudatory charters for great sums of money received, which he applied to his own use, and the use of the expelled monks.

Omitting in my translation some technical law phrases, the preamble is as follows :

" To all who shall see or hear this charter, Patrick, by the mercy of God, Bishop of Murray, and perpetual Commendator of the Monastery of Scone, and the Convent of the same, wisheth eternal salvation in the Lord. Know ye, that we having re-

* Bishop Keith's History, page 334.

ceived great sums of money from a noble and potent Lord, our dearest cousin Patrick Lord of Ruthven, in name and behalf of a noble Lady, Dame Janet Stewart, his spouse, and of an illustrious youth, William Master of Ruthven, son and apparent heir of the said noble Lord; and having duly considered what is for the advantage of our monastery, we have given and granted, and hereby give and grant, in feu-farm, the lands under written."

The lands granted to the Lady in liferent, and to William the Master of Ruthven after her death, are said in the charter to be "the lands of Nether Pitlowie, otherwise called Hoill de Cheyne," in the Sheriffdom of Perth and Regality of Scone, for which the yearly sum to be paid was fifty-three shillings, four pennies. Also the lands of "Achnapopple, vulgarly called 'the Peill,' which of old the progenitors of the said noble Lord had gifted to the monastery to obtain their suffrages or united prayers." The said lands were lying in the lordship of Ruthven and shire of Perth, and the yearly feu-duty to be paid was five pounds, six shillings, eight pennies.

The lands to which the Lady Ruthven was to have no right, were the lands of Byris, in the regality of Scone and shire of Perth, for which the yearly feu-duty to be paid was thirteen pounds, six shillings, eight pennies, usual money of Scotland, and twenty-four poultry.

These lands of Byris were granted as follows, viz. To the foresaid William Master of Ruthven, and his heirs-male: Failing whom, to Archibald Ruthven his brother-german and his heirs-male: Failing whom, to George Ruthven, brother-german of the said William and Archibald, and his heirs-male: Failing whom, to James Ruthven, brother-german of the said William, Archibald, and George, and his heirs-male: Failing whom, to Alexander Ruthven, brother-german of the foresaid William, Archibald, George, and James, and his heirs-male: Failing all whom, to the nearest male heirs or assignees of the foresaid William.

The charter is dated at the monastery of Scone, November 16, 1560, witnesses, John Crighton of Strathurd; Sir John Ballenden of Auchnoule; Patrick Blinsale, Sir William Ramsay, and John Davidson, notaries public. (Signed) Patrick, Bishop of Murray, Commendator of Scone.

In Douglas's List, the sons of Patrick Lord Ruthven were William and Alexander, by his first wife, Lady Jean Douglas; and by his second wife, Lady Janet Stewart, James, who was Precentor or Chanter of the Cathedral Church of Dunkeld, in the year 1584. But according to the Scoon charter, and some others which followed it, Patrick Lord Ruthven had five sons, William, Archibald, George, James, and Alexander, all of them brothers-german, and therefore sons by the same mother.

Spottiswood says, that George, son of Patrick Lord Ruthven, was killed at Stirling, September 3, 1571, along with the Regent, Mathew Stewart, Earl of Lennox*. But I apprehend there was a mistake in the name, and that it was Archibald, not George, who was there killed.

There is some reason to believe that George was the famous Mr. George Ruthven, chirurgeon in Perth, where he lived to a great age. He says, in Adamson's "Muses Threnodie," that, in 1559, he was twelve or thirteen years of age. He was therefore born in the year 1546, two years after the battle of the bridge of Tay, in which, he says, his

* Archbishop Spottiswood's History, page 256.

father (who must have been Patrick then Master of Ruthven) signalised himself. Mr. George was a peaceable inoffensive man, and addicted to study. He had great knowledge of history, and had the character of being a virtuoso. In his cabinet or museum, he had a large collection of natural curiosities, particularly the preserved bodies and bones of animals of various kinds. He is introduced as the relator of the historical anecdotes contained in Mr. Henry Adamson's Poem concerning Perth.

In 1600, though he might have been suspected, as the uncle of John Earl of Gowrie, of being in some degree concerned in the bloody event which had happened in Perth, we are told that he was brought into no great trouble, but made his innocence evident to all parties.

The Perth Literary and Antiquarian Society have in their museum, as a relic of this venerable gentleman, the wainscot armed chair in which he usually sat. The shield of the Ruthven coat of arms is carved on the back, and over it this inscription; "Mr. G. R." (Mr. George Ruthven) "1588."

Patrick Lord Ruthven had many daughters. I only mention that his daughter, Jean Ruthven, was,

about the year 1568, married to Henry Stewart, the second Lord Methven, the son of Lady Janet Stewart by her third husband, Lord Methven.

4. WILLIAM, FOURTH LORD RUTHVEN AND FIRST EARL OF GOWRIE.

This famous nobleman, the eldest son of Patrick Lord Ruthven and Lady Jean Douglas, was born about the year 1541. I have elsewhere spoken of his marriage with Dorothea Stewart, which happened August 17, 1561.

The following account may be given, as a summary of his public actions. In 1566, he was along with his father at the assassination of David Rizzio. In 1567, he visited Queen Mary when she was confined in the castle of Lochlevin, and endeavoured to persuade her to resign her Crown; but he was so much overcome by her tears, that the other Lords of his party resolved never again to employ him in any errand of such a kind. He was firmly attached to the Regent, Earl of Morton, and was always of the party who were influenced by the English Councils. In 1581, he opposed Queen Mary's restoration to her Crown; and in

that same year he was the chief actor in what was called "The Raid of Ruthven." Immediately after his father's death he was chosen to be Provost of Perth, and, while he lived, was always contiued in that office. In 1571 he was appointed Lord Treasurer of Scotland; and August 23, 1581, was created Earl of Gowrie.

In 1584, having renewed his correspondence with the confederate Lords, he was commanded to banish himself from Scotland; but he was loath to leave his large estates and his numerous family. As one proof of his taste for magnificence, and of the pleasure he took in what was indeed the lawful enjoyment of his possessions, he, in the year 1579, made a large addition to his house in Perth, for thus we are told in the burial-register of Perth, "May 21, 1579, Archibald Wylie was killed by the fall of a stone, at my Lord Ruthven's new beginning of his work." The south side of the square was then built or repaired. Also at the south-west corner was then built the turret, in the uppermost chamber of which, called the library or study, this Earl's two sons, John and Alexander, were slain, August 5, 1600.

David Hume of Godscroft, in his history of the Douglasses, relates, that in March 1584, he visited the Earl of Gowrie in his house at Perth. The Earl had received, March 2, a peremptory order to leave the kingdom within fourteen days. Mr. Hume says, that he found him, "in words, countenance and gesture, greatly perplexed, solicitous about his estate, the affairs of the kingdom, and greatly afraid of the violence of the courtiers. Looking pitifully upon his gallery, wherein," says Mr. Hume, "we were walking at the time, and which he had lately built and decored with pictures, he broke out into these words, having first fetched a deep sigh, Cousin, is there no remedy? *Et impius hæc tam culta novalia miles habebit? Barbarus has segetes** ?"

The Latin sentence which the disconsolate Earl quoted, was taken from the first eclogue of Virgil, where Melibœus laments the ejectment from his farm, and from his pleasant habitation, which he expected soon to suffer: "And shall an impious soldier have these well cultivated fields? Shall a barbarian seize on these standing corns?" The

* Page 377.

impious soldier to whom the Earl alluded, was most probably the flagitious Captain James Stewart, his mortal enemy, who, in 1581, had been created Earl of Arran.

It appears from the session minutes of Perth, that the Earl of Gowrie, March 30, was still lingering in that town, where he was acting as Provost, and as a member of the kirk-session. In proof of it, I shall give the following curious extract, and which may serve also as a specimen of the still remaining rudeness of the people: "March 30, 1584, Whilk day the minister" (Mr. Patrick Galloway,) "accused Thomas Anderson, *alias* Turner, before my Lord Gowrie and the elders, for interrupting of the psalm, and speaking in time of sermon; and, immediately after the sermon, calling his minister a drunken minister. The said Thomas declined the judgment of the minister, because he was a party, and appealed unto the presbytery. Yet, he still giving injurious talk to the minister, he was committed by my Lord Gowrie to be put in fast ward, till he should find caution to answer to the kirk."

The Earl, after the beginning of April, went to Dundee, to hire a vessel to transport him from

Scotland. But as he was still lingering there, Colonel William Stewart of Houston, (April 13,) came with a company of armed horsemen, and forcibly seized him in his lodgings at Dundee. He was carried as a prisoner to Edinburgh; and from thence, in the beginning of May, he was carried to Stirling. His trial took place at Stirling, (May 4,) and on the evening of the same day in which he had been tried, he was beheaded at the mercat cross, in such haste were his enemies to get rid of him before the English Court should interfere in his favour. Some writers have blundered in their giving the date of his death, but one of the old MS. Chronicles at Perth, very properly says, "The execution of William Earl of Gowrie, Lord Ruthven, was at Stirling, fourth day of May, anno 1584."

Mr. Patrick Galloway, who was then the minister of Perth, had (April 27,) after the apprehension of the Earl of Gowrie, fled into England, to escape from the renewed tyranny of the Earl of Arran. His life had been threatened. In his book, entitled, "Galloway's Apology," written after the Earl of Gowrie's death, he says, "Likewise in April (1584) William Earl of Gowrie, a pearl of

godliness, policy, learning, and all notable virtues, was treacherously, by the craft of the Earls of Arran, Montrose, and Crawfurd, and of Colonel Stewart, apprehended in Dundee, and brought to Edinburgh, to be afterwards put to death on similar causes," that is, upon false and feigned pretensions.*

Mr. Galloway was connected with the Earl, who was one of his elders, in the religious government of the town of Perth, and well knew his regard to religion. It is generally acknowledged that the Earl was an able statesman, though, on some occasions, he lessened the confidence which his friends were placing in him, by the anxiety which he shewed about his own personal security. He was a firm supporter of the reformed religion, and, at the time when Esm Duke of Lennox was in Scotland, was one of the chief instruments of preventing the re-introduction of popery. "Godliness" is ascribed to him by Mr. Galloway, as having eminently belonged to him, and it is indeed that part of character which affords to survivors the most

* Calderwood's printed History, page 149.

pleasing thoughts concerning any person who has left this mortal life.

William Earl of Gowrie evidently suspected what would befal him, for while he was lingering at Dundee, a jury, which met most probably at Perth, and with his consent, (April 11, 1584,) gave infeftment of his lands to his eldest son James, Master of Gowrie. He probably thought that by this infeftment his family would suffer no loss, whatever should happen to himself. A list of his numerous lands, extracted from this instrument of seisin, is in the possession of the Perth Literary and Antiquarian Society, which was presented to them by one of their own members, the Reverend Mr. John Dowe, minister of Methven. But the Earl's estates and honours were forfeited at his death, and his family continued to be deprived of them till, the Earl of Arran's influence having declined at Court, they were restored by an act of Parliament, December 10, 1585.

4. A LIST

OF THE

CHILDREN OF WILLIAM EARL OF GOWRIE, AND OF HIS COUNTESS DOROTHEA STEWART.

The Earl and his Countess were married at Perth, August 17, 1561, at which time he was only Master of Ruthven. They had five Sons, and seven or eight Daughters.—Concerning some of them, extracts will be given from the Parish Registers.

SONS.

1. James.—*Baptism Register.*—"Perth, September 22, 1757. Pater (Father) William Lord Ruthven. Witnesses, James Earl of Morton, Regent, and the Earl of Angus. Nomen, (name of the Child), James Ruthven."

James, after the estates and honours, which had been forfeited at the time of his Father's death, were restored, succeeded his father, in the end of the year 1585, as second Earl of Gowrie. He

was then some months above twelve years of age, and had begun a regular course of education. Douglas, in his Book of the Peerage, says of him, "He was a youth of great hopes, and of a sweet disposition." Young as he was, he was elected Provost of Perth, in 1587, but died after he had been a second time elected to that office, in the end of the year 1588. He was buried in the north east corner of the East Church of Perth.

2. JOHN.—His name is not recorded in the Baptism Register of Perth. Perhaps he was born elsewhere. His birth may be reckoned to have been some time in the year 1578. He succeeded his brother James, as Third Earl of Gowrie. But I purpose, if time and capacity shall be continued, to give in a separate article, a pretty full account of the life and death of this nobleman.

3. ALEXANDER.—*Baptism Register.*—"Perth, January 22, 1580-1. Pater, William Lord Ruthven. Witnesses, my Lord Atholl, and Alexander, my Lord Hume. Nomen, Alexander Ruthven."

He was educated under the care of Mr. Robert Rollock, Principal of the College of Edinburgh.

He was early appointed one of the Gentlemen of the Bed Chamber to King James VI.; but he was killed along with the Earl his brother, in the Gowrie Palace at Perth, Aug. 5, 1600. His age, at the time of his death, was nineteen years, and nearly seven months. Douglas, in a note to his Book of the Peerage, (Page 307.) says, "The gentle and peaceable dispositions of the two brothers, made them to be idolized by all who knew them."

4. WILLIAM.—His name is not recorded in the Perth Baptism Register. When his two elder brothers were slain at Perth, in 1600, he may have been nearly about eighteen years of age. He was then with his mother, the Countess Dowager, at Dirleton.

Calderwood relates, that "two days before the slaughter of John Earl of Gowrie, and his brother Alexander, the King wrote a letter to William Ruthven, the Earl's *Father's* brother, to meet him at Perth on the 5th of August." But the Earl had no uncle of the name of William. Therefore the transcriber of the MS. carelessly erred in inserting the word "*Father's*." The words, according to the original MS. should have been, "Wil-

liam Ruthven, the Earl's Brother." William did not obey the King's invitation. Probably, if he had come to Perth, he would have suffered death along with his two elder brothers. On the evening of the 6th of August, he fled into England. From thence he afterwards went to foreign parts, where he lived and died, celebrated, according to Bishop Burnet, for his skill in alchymy or transmutation of metals. There was even a report concerning him that he had found the Philosopher's Stone.

5. PATRICK.—His name is not recorded in the Baptism Register of Perth. He seems to have been the youngest of William Earl of Gowrie's children, and perhaps was a posthumous child.—He fled into England along with his brother William, and continued in that country.

King James, after his accession to the Crown of England, committed Patrick Ruthven to the Tower of London, where he remained a prisoner many years. After the accession of King Charles I. he was liberated from his confinement, and a small yearly pension was settled upon him. According

to Sanderson, (Page 228.) Patrick, in the year 1652, was walking on the streets of London as a poor gentleman, "but well experienced in chymical physick, and in other parts of learning."

He had married a wife while he was prisoner in the Tower of London; and Crawfurd, in his Lives of the Officers of State, (Page 391.) says, "Dr. Ruthven left a daughter, who was married to Sir Anthony Vandyke, the famous picture drawer."

Such was the termination of the male descendants of William Earl of Gowrie. Thereby a more easy way was opened to the King for prosecuting in Scotland his projects of oppression, which rendered himself unhappy, and afterwards involved in ruin his three immediate successors.

DAUGHTERS.

1. MARY.—Her name is not recorded in the Baptism Register of Perth. Queen Mary arrived in Scotland in August 1562, and Mary Ruthven, her name daughter, may have been born about that time.

It is said in the Marriage Register, "Perth, January 24, 1579-80, was married John Earl of Atholl and Mary Ruthven."

In Moyses' Memoirs, (Page 40.) "In January 1579-80, a marriage was solemnised at Perth, betwixt John Earl of Atholl and Lord Ruthven's eldest daughter with great triumph."

This John Stewart, fifth Earl of Atholl, the husband, died in his house in the Spey-Street of Perth August 30, 1594. His death and funeral are thus recorded in Fleming and Mercer's MS. Chronicle in my possession: "John Earl of Atholl deceased in Perth, on the penult day of August, 1594 years. He was honourably conveyed to Dunkeld, the 11th of September thereafter. The Queen's Majesty" (Ann of Denmark) "being in Perth, in William Hall's fore-chamber beneath the Cross, beheld the convoy of the corpse."

Dorothea Stewart, the eldest daughter of John Fifth Earl of Atholl, and of Mary Ruthven, was the heiress of Atholl. In July 1604, she was married to William Murray, then Master of Tullibardin. But according to the Kirk Session Minutes of that date, the marriage was much against the will of her Mother, the Countess Dowager of

Atholl. The Countess entered a most grievous complaint against Mr. William Cowper, one of the ministers of Perth, by whom the parties had been contracted. The Master of Tullibardin was one of those who had assisted the King at Perth, August 5, 1600, when the Countess' two brothers, John and Alexander, were slain.

2. JEAN.—Her name is not recorded in the Baptism Register of Perth. In 1581 she was married to James Lord Ogilvy, ancestor of the Earls of Airley.

Moyses' Memoirs, (Page 57.) "Upon the 11th of November, 1581, the Master of Ogilvy was married in Holyroodhouse, upon a daughter of the Earl of Gowrie, with great solemnity and triumph."

3. SOPHIA.—Her name is not recorded in the Baptism Register of Perth. It was probably about the year 1590 that she was married to Ludovick Stewart, the second Duke of Lennox. She had no children; and if a MS. belonging to the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth can be relied on, she went distracted on hearing the news of her bro-

thers John and Alexander being put to death at Perth, in the year 1600; and died soon after. The Duke of Lennox was afterwards twice married, but died without issue.

4. ELIZABETH.—Her name is not recorded in the Perth Baptism Register. Douglas gives her the name of Margaret; but Fleming and Mercer's MS. Chronicle gives her the name of Elizabeth. She was married some time before the year 1600, to John Lord Graham, Master of Montrose, who, by the death of his father, became the fourth Earl of Montrose, in 1608. Their eldest son was the brave and famous Loyalist, James Marquis of Montrose.

The death and burial of this Lady, are thus mentioned in Fleming and Mercer's MS. Chronicle: "April 15, 1618, Elizabeth Ruthven, Countess of Montrose, was buried at Aber-ruthven."

Baptism Register.—"Perth, March 7, 1615. Pater, Earl of Montrose. Witnesses, David Murray, Lord Scone, and Adam (Ballenden,) Bishop of Dunblane. Nomen, Beatrix Graham." This Lady, Beatrix Graham, who was born at Perth,

was married to David Drummond, third Lord Maderty.

5. Lilias.—*Baptism Register.*—"Perth, January 27, 1568-9. Pater, William Lord Ruthven. Witnesses, John Campbell of Glenorchie, and Patrick, Master of Drummond. Nomen, Lilias Ruthven."

Neither Crawfurd, nor Douglas, mention her by that name; but Lord Strathallan says, that Lilias was married to the Duke of Lennox. But Crawfurd and Douglas give to the Duchess of Lennox the name of Sophia. I apprehend that Lilias was married to Sir Robert Gordon of Lochinvar, ancestor of the Viscounts of Kenmuir. This gentleman, in his younger days, was celebrated for his great bodily strength.

6. Dorothea.—*Baptism Register.*—"Perth, April 30, 1570. Pater, William Lord Ruthven. Witnesses, Duncan Campbell, and James Haryng. Nomen, Dorothea Ruthven."

She is not mentioned by this name, either by Crawfurd or Douglas. According to Lord Strathallan, Dorothea was the wife of Sir John Wemyss of Pittencrieff. Douglas says, the name of Lady

Pittencrief was Barbara. But Douglas was mistaken.

7. CATHERINE.—*Baptism Register.*—"Perth, February 27, 1571-2. Pater, William Lord Ruthven. Witnesses, Harry Lord Meffen, and Patrick Lord Drummond. Nomen, Catharine Ruthven." The following memorandum is added in the Register: "My Lord Meffen was slain by an gun out of the Castle of Edinburgh, the fourth day thereafter."

Catharine is not mentioned in the Books of the Peerage. Perhaps she died in infancy; or may have been that daughter who remained unmarried, and to whom Lord Strathallan gives the name of Barbara.

8. BEATRIX.—She is not mentioned in the Baptism Register. I apprehend she was the youngest of William Earl of Gowrie's daughters. She attended the Court, as a Lady of the Bed-Chamber of Ann of Denmark, the wife of King James VI. and was the special friend and confident of that Queen. Some little time after the year 1600, she was married to Sir John Hume of Coldingknows, and their

son, or grandson, succeeded to the Earldom of Hume in the year 1635.

Such were the honourable marriages obtained by seven of the daughters of William Earl of Gowrie. Lord Strathallan, in his MS. Collections, (Page 65.) and Crawfurd and Douglas, in their Books of the Peerage, all agree with regard to the noblemen and gentlemen to whom the daughters were married, but they differ in giving the names of some of the ladies. Lord Strathallan's List, which is not so generally known, is as follows: "William Earl of Gowrie had eight daughters. 1. Mary, Countess of Atholl. 2. Jean, Lady Ogilvy. 3. Lilias, Duchess of Lennox. 4. Dorothea, Lady Pittencrief, without issue. 5. Margaret, Countess of Montrose. 6. Beatrix, Lady Coldingknows, now Earls of Hume. 7. Elizabeth, Lady Lochinvar, now Viscounts of Kenmuir. 8. Barbara, unmarried."

So much perplexity attends the framing of "Family Statements," as makes me glad to think that I may not again have occasion to engage in a work of that kind.

A

HISTORY

OF THE

LIFE AND DEATH

OF

JOHN EARL OF GOWRIE.

HISTORY

OF

JOHN EARL OF GOWRIE.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.

His Birth and Education. His teachers. Goes to the University of Edinburgh. His improvement there. Chosen Provost of Perth. In arms against the King. Goes abroad with his Tutor, Mr. William Rhind. His reception by Theodore Beza. Goes to the University of Padua. His Letter to King James VI. Chosen Rector of the University. Leaves Padua. His residence with Theodore Beza. Is at the Court of France. His intimacy there with the English Ambassador. Comes to England in his way home. His reception by Queen Elizabeth. Conjecture concerning the Lady Arabella Stewart. He is suspected by the Court of Scotland.

JOHN Ruthven, sixth Lord of Ruthven, and third Earl of Gowrie, was the second son of William the first Earl of Gowrie, and of Dorothea Stewart, daughter or grand-daughter of Henry Stewart, the

first Lord Methven. He was born in the year 1577, or 1578; and when he was about eleven years of age, succeeded in the Earldom to his elder brother James, who died a minor, in the end of the year 1588.

His father, grand-father, and great-grandfather, had been successful promoters of the Reformation, and great care was taken that he should be early well instructed in the doctrines of the Protestant religion.

The general superintendency of his education was committed to Mr. Robert Rollock, Principal of the College of Edinburgh, who was an able and pious divine, and author of some learned treatises. Calderwood, in his MS. History, speaking of the Earl, says, "He was brought up under Mr. Rollock, who dearly loved him for his good behaviour, and the virtues which appeared in him." He had also a private tutor, Mr. William Rhind, a native of Perth, who accompanied him till the end of his life, wherever he went, and watched over his morals with a fatherly care.

Having gone through the ordinary course of grammar at the school of Perth, he went, about the year 1591, to the University of Edinburgh.

We learn from Mr. Thomas Crawfurd, in his History of the College of Edinburgh, that the Earl's Master there for Logic and Philosophy, was Mr. Charles Ferme, who had lately been elected one of the Regents. He continued in Mr. Ferme's Class till August 12, 1593, on which day he defended his Thesis, disputing with his philosophical opponents; and, having then subscribed the National Covenant, was laureated, that is, was crowned with the Cap of Master of Arts *. He afterwards attended the class in which the Roman and municipal laws were taught.

While he was yet in his non-age, and a student at the College, the Town Council of Perth elected him to be their Provost in the year 1592. His elder brother, his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather, had all been in that same office †.

We learn from David Moyses', that the Earl was very prematurely brought into military action ‡. In the year 1593, his brother-in-law, John Stewart, Earl of Atholl, and John Graham, Earl of Montrose, espousing the cause of Francis Stew-

* Crawfurd's Hist. of College of Edinburgh, page 37.

† Town Records.

‡ Moyse's Memoirs, page 212.

art, Earl of Bothwell, and disgusted with the favourable partiality which the King was shewing in behalf of the Popish Lords, levied troops, according to the rude but frequent practice of those times, to compel the King to alter his political conduct. They strengthened their party, by adopting the Earl of Gowrie, young as he was, to be their associate.

The King and his army defeated them at the Castle of Downe, in October 1593, and in the pursuit, Atholl and Gowrie were in great danger of having been slain. Atholl and Montrose soon afterwards made their peace with the King; and Gowrie, being considered only as a minor, and under the power of others, was easily pardoned, though, in this instance, he had appeared in arms against the King.

August 6, 1594, the Earl of Gowrie acquainted the Town Council of Perth, that he was now farther to prosecute his studies, by attending a foreign University, and therefore would be abroad for some years *. The Town-Council, as a testimony of their respect to the Ruthven family, and of the

* Town Records.

good hopes they entertained of him, bound themselves and their successors in office, by a written obligation, to choose him annually as their Provost, till he should return to his native country. It is proper to notice, that one of the witnesses attesting this written obligation, was Mr. Patrick Galloway, who once had been the minister of Perth, but was now one of the King's Chaplains, and still a frequent visitor in the town. Yet after the Earl's death, Mr. Galloway was the person who was most active and successful in the endeavours which were then used to defame him.

The University of Padua, in the Venetian territory, was the foreign university which the Earl was directed to attend. It was famous at that time for its ten colleges, and for the number and abilities of its professors. He left Scotland in the autumn of 1594, accompanied by his private tutor, Mr. William Rhind. They carried along with them from their friends in Scotland, who had correspondents in foreign parts, introductory letters, some of which they delivered in their way through France. In one of these letters, Principal Rollock was particularly earnest in the Earl's commendation to Theodore Beza, the successor of Calvin in the church

of Geneva; and when the Earl and his tutor arrived at Geneva, Beza gave them a most welcome reception*.

This great and good man was not only eminently distinguished by his theological learning, but also by his classical taste, and his genius as a poet. He was much captivated by the Earl's amiable manners and pious dispositions. We are told by Calderwood, that he never altered from the good opinion he had conceived of him; that he never mentioned, or heard mentioned, the circumstances of his death, without shedding tears; and that when proclamations were issued against the Earl's two younger brothers, William and Patrick, Beza offered them an asylum with himself in the city of Geneva.

Nearly seven years of the Earl of Gowrie's short life were spent in an absence from his native country. Very few particulars of his history during these years are now known. When he commenced his studies at Padua, he wrote a dutiful letter to King James VI. acquainting him of his arrival there, and of the studies in which he was to be en-

* Cald. MS.

gaged. The King wrote a very affectionate and flattering letter to him in return.

The Earl's answer to the King's letter is preserved in the College Library of Edinburgh, and a copy of it was given by Lord Hailes, in his Criticism on the King's own account of the Gowrie Conspiracy *. As it is the only piece of the Earl's writing which I know of as now existing, it may be proper that I should here insert a copy of it. It is as follows:

"PLEASE YOUR MAJESTY,

"If the bestowing of great benefits should move the receivers thereof to be thankful to the givers, I have many extraordinary occasions to be thankful to your Majesty; being not only favoured with the benefit of your Majesty's good countenance at all times, but also that it hath pleased your Majesty so well to accept of me, as to honour me with your Majesty's most loving letter, which is a certain sign and vive testimony of your Majesty's good favour and graciousness towards me; and I esteem it so much, that I would think myself very happy,

* Lord Hailes' Separate Pamphlet, in my possession, page 18.

if it should please your Majesty to command me in any thing, whereby your Majesty might have a proof of my prompt and faithful obedience; for your Majesty's worth and valor (power, virtue,) attour (besides) the particular partiality shewn to me, merits whatsoever I am able to do, and a hundred thousand times more.

"In the end, I pray your Majesty to have me excused that I have taken the audacity to write again to your Majesty; for not having the comfort of your Majesty's presence, I could not declare my willing mind better than by using the next remede. In the mean time I repose myself still on your Majesty's constant favor, till God, of his mercy, grants that I shall see your Majesty in so good estate as I wish, which will give me the greatest contentment of all.

"So craving earnestly the Creator of all things to bless your Majesty with all felicity and satisfaction in health, with an increase of many prosperous days, I kiss most devoutly your Majesty's hands.

"Your Majesty's most humble Subject and obedient Servant in all devotion.

"GOWRIE.

"*At Padua, the 24th of September*, 1595."

This letter must have been very gratifying to the King, and was exceedingly well written, considering that the Earl was only about seventeen years of age. When his father William, the first Earl of Gowrie, was beheaded at Stirling in 1584, the King had not then attained what was called "his perfect age." He was acting under the fascinating influence of an imperious favourite, James Stewart, Earl of Arran. To remove all resentful remembrance of this action, the honours and estates, which had been forfeited, were restored to the Gowrie family. The daughters were in great credit with King James' Queen, Ann of Denmark, and were obtaining honourable marriages; and Alexander, the Earl's next brother, had the certain prospect of court preferment, so soon as he should be of an age capable of it.

The King indeed knew that it was for his own interest, to endeavour to secure the Earl's friendship and devotedness to his service, who, when he should come home, would have it much in his power, because of his wealth and numerous connections, to support him in the measures of government which he might then be pursuing.

At Padua the Earl prosecuted his studies with extraordinary diligence. But the study in which he most delighted, seems to have been that of natural Philosophy, in all the parts of it. It should appear as an evidence of it, that he commonly carried in his pocket written notes, and scientifical signs and characters, to assist him in his astronomical, chemical, and other such researches. Calderwood says, "The Earl was held in such estimation, for his learning, virtues, and good carriage, that the members of the university elected him for one year to be their rector. It was the highest honour they could confer upon him; and in Calderwood's time, was to be seen, in their common Hall, the Earl's Coat of Arms, with his name and titles painted and hung up in memory of him *." The year of his rectorship was his last of attending the university. His election took place, I suppose, in the Autumn of 1597, and it is probable that he left Padua in the autumn of 1598.

It now behoved him, according to what was then the method of acquiring a complete education, to visit some foreign courts. There can be no doubt

* Cald. MS.

that he visited Rome before he left Italy; but his intention seems to have been to spend a considerable part of his time in France. In his way thither, he gratified his prevailing taste for literature, and indulged his pious temper of mind, by his continuing, as Calderwood informs us, three whole months with his valued friend, Theodore Beza. He lodged in Beza's house at Geneva, that he might more constantly have the benefit of his example and conversation.

Calderwood also informs us, that the Earl when there, wrote a letter to his old master, Principal Rollock, expressing his sentiments of religion, and the pleasure which he felt in Beza's company. But the Principal either was dead when the letter was written, or did not live to receive it; for according to Thomas Crawfurd, in his History of the College of Edinburgh, the Principal, Mr. Robert Rollock, died at Edinburgh, January 8, 1598-9*.

The Protestants in France, who were very numerous, had now begun to enjoy the free exercise of their religion, in consequence of the royal edict in their favour, granted to them in the city of Nantz

* Page 45.

in the summer of 1598. This privilege was continued with them almost an hundred years. Among them many, both of their clergy and laity, were eminently learned and good men. By them the pious Protestant Earl was honoured and kindly entertained. At the same time, the high quality he possessed in his own country, and his elegant accomplishments, rendered him an acceptable visitor at the Court of Henry IV.

When at Paris, and in his excursions through the French kingdom, he was necessarily in companies of various kinds. He particularly attended concerts of music, a divertisement in which he had probably learned to take pleasure when he was in Italy. But in these, and other such companies, he was accosted, and troubled with astrologers, a dangerous set of men, who were then abounding in all the countries of Europe. He treated them with contempt, and sometimes with anger, as he related, after he came home, to his cousin, James Wemyss of Bogie, in a jocular conversation which he had with him, concerning the secrets of nature. William Drummond of Hawthornden, in one of his familiar epistles, written about the year 1640, speaking of astrological predictions, says, "I never

knew any who had recourse to those unlawful curiosities who lived the ordinary age of man, God Almighty removing his grace from them."*

But an intimacy which the Earl of Gowrie contracted at Paris, seems to have affected in no inconsiderable degree, his after circumstances. Sir Ralph Winwood, in his Memoirs, mentions the friendship which subsisted between the Earl and the English ambassador, Sir Henry Neville. The ambassador wrote letters in his commendation to Queen Elizabeth and her ministers, and, in the character of a statesman, added, that the Earl was a person who could be useful to them in their transactions with Scotland†. But the Earl's purpose was to take the opportunity, for his farther improvement, to visit the Court of England in his way home, and he needed the ambassador's letters of introduction.

The state of Scotland, at this time, was, that the King was at open variance with the generality of the presbyterian ministers and their people, upon whom he was forcing a new ecclesiastical constitution, to which, upon many accounts, they were

* Drummond of Hawthornden's Works, page 147.

† Winwood's Memoirs, vol. i. page 156.

adverse. He was also prosecuting, with more courage than formerly, his favourite scheme of rendering himself absolute both in Church and State. From the reports which had been made to him from time to time of the Earl's professed principles, and of the persons with whom he chiefly associated, he could not hope for his support in the measures in which he was now engaged; it would seem to him most probable, that the Earl would espouse the cause of the opposite party, and imitate the religious and patriotic examples which had been set before him by his ancestors. A strong jealousy of him arose in the King's mind, when he heard of the caresses he was meeting with from the English Queen.

I have not found the precise date of the Earl's arrival in England. I suppose it may have been in the month of December 1599, and if so, his stay in that country may have been rather more than two months. Queen Elizabeth was prepared, by her ambassador's letters, to give him a favourable reception. The writer of a MS. now before me, says, "She ordered that guards should attend him; that all the honours should be paid to him which were due to a Prince of Wales, and to her first

ousin ; and that he should be entertained at the public expense all the time he should remain at her court."

The writer of the MS. was one of those who believed that John Earl of Gowrie was the grandson of Queen Elizabeth's aunt, Queen Margaret of Scotland, and thereby was one degree nearer allied to the English Crown than King James was. But all historians agree that the Earl met with a most flattering reception. Indeed, independently of any supposed affinity, it may well be imagined that Elizabeth would take pleasure in conferring some distinguishing tokens of respect on the son of her old friend William, the first Earl of Gowrie, who had suffered much by his adherence to her councils, and had aided her in her acts of policy with regard to her once formidable rival, Queen Mary of Scotland.

Consequences which, in the end, were fatal to John Earl of Gowrie, are thought, by many, to have followed from his having been in England. Principal Robertson, in his History of Scotland, suggests a conjecture, but with great modesty, that the Earl, when he was put to death in the year 1600, had a purpose of sending away the King secretly, in a

ship, as a captive to Queen Elizabeth *. It is necessary therefore to inquire how the Earl was employed when in England.

Possibly nothing more important occurred than that he had an audience of the Queen, partook of the festivities common at the end of the year, and, perhaps, found time to visit the two universities, and some of the principal towns. But if his attention was called to more serious business, the following observations may be made.

It was a part of Queen Elizabeth's character, that she could not bear with patience the smallest diminution of her regal power. In her old age, the influence of the King of Scots was daily gaining ground among her subjects. She was afraid, it is said, of his obtaining the chief management of her affairs, and even of his taking steps toward a premature possession of her Crown.

The two Sovereigns were now plotting against each other. King James was carrying on a correspondence with the Earl of Essex, who was convicted in February 1601 of a treasonable attempt to put the Queen under restraint; and Queen Eli-

* Robertson's History, *sub anno*.

zabeth is said to have wished that a scheme could be devised for delivering King James into her hands, that she might keep him more dependent upon her will, with regard to her declaring him to be her successor to the Crown.

But if she hinted this her wish in her private conferences with the Earl of Gowrie, it may well be imagined, that a young man, educated in the best principles, as he had been, would recoil and not suffer himself to be shaken in the loyalty which he owed to his own Sovereign, with whom also he had been favoured with a friendly correspondence. Her flatteries, if she used them, could not render blind a man, possessed of common sense, to the fatal issue of his accomplishing her desire; for if he had succeeded in accomplishing it, he must thereby have become odious to all his own countrymen, who would have avenged upon him, to his utter destruction, the affront given to their nation, and the injury he had done to their King.

There are events so industriously obscured, as to afford room for different opinions. Such an event was the catastrophe of John Earl of Gowrie. Upon the supposition that the English Queen endeavoured to secure him to her interest, she must have

sought to tempt him by the prospect of some reward. He was above being tempted by a pecuniary bribe; for his opulence in his own country would have made him treat an offer of that kind with scorn. But if there was really any thing serious and particular which passed between them, my conjecture is, that she might try to stimulate his ambition. She retained at her Court the Lady Arabella Stewart, then about twenty years of age, the only surviving child of the late Earl of Lennox, and great-granddaughter of Queen Margaret. King James was Queen Margaret's great-grandson, and he was always afraid that Queen Elizabeth would give this young Lady in marriage to some powerful man whom she favoured, and thereby render more difficult and uncertain his succession to the English Crown. This Lady might be proposed to the Earl of Gowrie; but his hope of marrying her, he must have known, could not be safely realized without his having the consent of the Scottish King.

Camden, in his history of the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, says, "There went about some false rumours of the marriage of King James' un-

cle's daughter, the Lady Arabella Stewart *." Indeed the rumour of this Lady's marriage with the Earl of Gowrie was enough to provoke the King to resolve on his destruction, especially if the Earl had at last proceeded to ask the King's consent.

In an agreement with this conjecture, we are told of an opinion propagated after the Earl's death, that his death was occasioned by an affair of love, in which he had been opposed by the King. A prediction was handed about, said to have been made to him when abroad, containing that " he should return to his own country, should, with too much love, fall into melancholy, should seek a wife, and before he was married should die with his sword in his hand †." The prediction, though it may have been fabricated after his death, might be thought by many to refer to his having been disappointed of marrying the Lady who had been proposed to him by Queen Elizabeth.

* Camden, in the large Collection of English Histories, page 653.

† Nicolson's Letter to Sir Robert Cecil, November 12, 1600. Sanderson's History, page 226.

A writer of a good genius, and of a lively and fertile imagination, might, not without semblance of truth, frame upon this subject, an affecting story. He might show how much the Earl of Gowrie, by his assiduities and polite attentions, distinguished the Lady Arabella Stewart when he saw her among the other Ladies at the English Court; also how acceptable the Earl would have been to her, especially as an old English writer, Sir Edward Peyton, describes him, as having been a young nobleman "of a comely vizage, of a good stature, and an attracting allurement," that is, was very pleasant and agreeable, and captivating in his manners *. And then the novelist might relate how cruelly the King resented, upon the Earl, his ambitious desire of being married to a Lady so nearly allied to the English Crown.

To perfect the story, I shall subjoin the concluding part of the history of the unfortunate Lady. In summer 1603, after King James had been placed on the English throne, a plot was formed, in which even Sir Walter Raleigh bore a part, to set the King aside, and to put the Lady Arabella in his

* Peyton's Divine Catastrophe, page 10.

room. She gave no countenance to the conspiracy, but still the King's jealousy of her kept her from being espoused to a husband. At last the Lady ventured, without the King's knowledge, to marry privately an English gentleman, Sir William Seymour, who was afterwards Marquis of Hertford.

I shall give the words of Arthur Wilson, a very good writer, in his History of Great Britain, " They" viz. Sir William and the Lady, " were both, at some distance, allied to the Crown, therefore such a conjunction could not be allowed in the Royal Almanack, so dreadful is every apparition which comes near to princes titles. Sir William for the marriage was committed to the Tower, and the Lady Arabella confined to her house at Hygate.

" But, after some imprisonment, they conclude to escape beyond sea together, and appointed to meet at a certain place upon the Thames. Sir William, leaving his man in his bed to act his part with his keeper, got out of the Tower in a disguise, and came to the place appointed. The Lady, dressed like a young gallant, in man's attire, followed him from her house. But her staying long above the limited time, made him suspicious of her interception, so that he went away, leaving notice if she

came, that he was gone before to Dunkirk. She, good Lady, fraught with more fears, and lagging in her flight, was apprehended, brought back to the Tower, and there finished her earthly pilgrimage*."

She died in the Tower of London, September 27, 1615, which was not many days after she had been there confined, and was generally thought to have been poisoned, in obedience to a secret order from the King, who accounted her as having been guilty of an act which might have proved dangerous to his sovereign power. Camden, in his brief annals, relates, that the Lady Arabella Stewart, who had died in the Tower, was interred in the night at Westminster, without any funeral pomp, in the same vault in which Mary Queen of Scots and Prince Henry were buried; for he intimates that those who die in the King's prison are not allowed a public burial, lest it should be thought "that they had been thrown into prison wrongfully."

Leaving this digression, it must be observed, that whatever passed with regard to the Earl of Gowrie

* Wilson's History, page 90.

at the English Court, and probably much more than what truly happened, was reported to the King in Scotland, by those officious persons who sought to ingratiate themselves with a Prince who, they expected, would be soon their Sovereign. Even Sir Robert Cecil, the Queen's principal Secretary of State, is said to have carried on, for some years, a confidential correspondence with the King of Scots, without, however, doing any real injury to the Queen whom he served. He was solicitous that King James should be her successor, and advised the proper steps which should be taken for that purpose. One evidence of this correspondence is, that after the King came to England, Sir Robert Cecil was continued in his office, and made Earl of Salisbury.

Certain it is, that King James, and such of his courtiers as were of a servile kind, were prejudiced against the Earl of Gowrie before he arrived amongst them. They were convinced that they could never meet with support from him, and that he would rather be their formidable opponent in those schemes of arbitrary government which they had adopted, and which had been first suggested when Esme Stewart, who was afterwards Duke of Lennox, came to Scotland in the year 1581.

CHAPTER II.

CONTENTS.

Mr. David Calderwood. The Earl arrives at Edinburgh. The King's ungracious behaviour. Character of the Queen. The Earl gives offence, by opposing the King. Arrives at Perth. His Character. Goes to Strathbraan. The King invites him to hunt at Falkland. The Earl refuses. The Court at Falkland. A Court Anecdote of the Queen and Mr. Alexander Ruthven. Mr. Alexander Ruthven leaves Falkland. Anecdote of Dr. Herries and Lady Beatrix Ruthven. Preparations for executing a Plot against the Earl and his brother Alexander.

In continuing my account of John Earl of Gowrie, I am to rely much on the authority of Calderwood's unprinted History of the Church of Scotland; and will also make use of the two MSS. which I mentioned in my List of Tracts on the Gowrie Conspiracy; to the first of which I gave the name of the Edinburgh MS. and to the other, though I am not certain who the author was, I gave the name of Stewart's Collections.

Mr. David Calderwood, who was sometime minister of Crailing, in the presbytery of Jedburgh, was born in the year 1575. He was, at the time of Gowrie's alleged conspiracy, twenty-five years of age. He was a man eminently possessed of a public spirit, and was remarkably attentive to the national transactions, especially to those which affected the interests of the Church. I have been furnished with a full copy of his account of the Gowrie affair, which he wrote betwixt the years 1605 and 1622, or 1624; but at the time in which he wrote, no person in Scotland could publicly throw the blame in that affair upon the King without being in danger of imprisonment, of banishment, or of the loss of life. He therefore took the cautious method of introducing and displaying the improbabilities in the King's Narrative, always with this preface, "It was thought strange," and then left the inference to the reader's own judgment.

The writers of the two MSS. above mentioned relate particulars which were handed down to them by tradition, and which some old people, as I myself now do, remembered to have often heard. Mr. Stewart, in his confused collections on that subject, professes to have availed himself of a vindica-

tion of Gowrie printed immediately after his death, but which was soon suppressed, though some copies of it were preserved by divers gentlemen in their family repositories.

According to Calderwood, it was in the end of February 1600 that John Earl of Gowrie arrived at Edinburgh, after his long absence in foreign parts. He was then about twenty-two years of age, and the young man was happy in again seeing his native country. His arrival occasioned a general joy. As his ancestors had been, he himself, from the character given of him by pious and eminent men abroad, was also high in the esteem of the people. They considered that his opulent estates would render him independent of the favours of a corrupt Court, and that he would have it much in his power to defend what they reckoned the pure religion, and their civil liberties. But there was no joy in the heart of the King. Calderwood relates, that the King showed that his temper was soured. When told that the Earl of Gowrie was passing up the street of Edinburgh, with a number of his friends, and followed with the acclamations of a vast multitude of people, he peevishly replied, " There

were as many people who convoyed his father to the scaffold at Stirling."

The Earl, after his arrival, paid his dutiful respects to the King, and there is reason to think that it was his sincere desire to live in friendship with his Majesty, and to obey his commands in all things that were lawful. His religious education had taught him that this was his duty. But the King's mind was intent on accomplishing unpopular designs, in which he was certain the Earl never would concur. He did not improve in him any growing affection; but such was his hatred of him, as the determined opposer of his favourite schemes, that, though he valued himself for his talent for dissimulation, he could not always refrain from uttering discouraging and sarcastical reflections.

We learn from Calderwood, that one morning when the King was sitting at breakfast, and the Earl was standing behind his chair, the conversation turned upon dogs, and hawks, and hunting. The King suddenly changed the subject, and said, "My Lord Gowrie, what is it which will make a woman part with child?" The Earl thought himself obliged, in his answer, to mention his conjectures of some expedients; but the King not ap-

pearing satisfied, he at last said, " A fright might be effectual." The King then burst into a scornful laughter, and replied, as if to the whole company, " If that which our Lord Gowrie says were true, I would not now have been sitting here," alluding to the fright which the Earl's grandfather, Patrick Lord Ruthven, and his armed associates, gave to the King's mother, Queen Mary, who was two months gone with child of him at the time when they dragged David Rizzio from her presence and put him to death.

Colonel William Stewart of Houston was still alive in the year 1600, and was in great favour with the King, as he always had been. This gentleman, who in his post of Colonel of the King's Guards, acted officially in all the oppressive measures which were carried on while James Stewart, Earl of Arran, preserved his influence over the King, was the person who, in 1584, seized at Dundee William the first Earl of Gowrie, and consigned him over to imprisonment and death. It could not be expected that the young Earl would now like to see the man who had been so much accessary to his father's death. But the Colonel often intruded himself into his company, and the King

was so very indelicate, as to insist that he should treat him with cordiality.

Calderwood relates that the King challenged the Earl of Gowrie for "looking down on Colonel Stewart." The Earl answered, with a becoming spirit, "Sir, I will never seek that man, but it is not fit that he should cross my teeth." Sanderson makes an improbable addition to the Earl's reply, for he says the Earl answered, "Aquila non capit muscas," "The eagle does not catch at flies*." This implied a proud threatening to the prime promoters of his father's death, which he could not have uttered to the King with the smallest degree of prudence.

King James' Queen often displeased him, by professing herself an admirer of handsome young men, whatever their political principles were. The Earl of Gowrie and his brother Alexander were both of this description, and she sought to compensate the Earl by her courtesy for her husband's repulsive behaviour. She was also influenced to do so by the Earl's sisters, who were great Ladies at Court. They were the Duchess of Lennox;

* Sanderson's History, page 226.

the Countess of Atholl; the Lady of John Lord Graham, afterwards Earl of Montrose; the Lady of James Lord Ogilvy, ancestor of the Earls of Airley; the Lady of Sir Robert Gordon of Lochinvar, ancestor of the Viscounts of Kenmuir; and the Lady of Sir John Wemyss of Pittencrief. Above all, the unmarried sister, Lady Beatrix Ruthven, had influence with the Queen. She was her constant attendant, and her principal confidant in all her affairs.

Such being the state of the female party in the Court of King James VI. the Earl, in their society, would find some comfort also in the company of the Countess Dowager his mother, and of other ladies and gentlemen of independent principles, to whom his polished manners and his excellent dispositions would render him agreeable.

But an event occurred, by which it became dangerous for him to remain any longer at Court. A council of nobles was held, in which a new tax was proposed, which the King was very urgent should take place. Calderwood tells us, that the King was thwarted in his desire by the Earl of Gowrie; and that when the Earl was speaking against the tax, as that which would be oppressive to the people,

Sir David Murray of Gospetrie, who afterwards was created Lord Scoon, said, in the hearing of several persons, " Yonder is an unhappy man. They are but seeking a cause for his death, and now he has given it." This intelligent courtier well knew the King's mind with regard to the Earl of Gowrie, and that there were persons who were coveting his estates. From the time in which the Earl had given this specimen, of what his after conduct would be, it may be supposed that snares were laid to entrap him, and projects formed for his destruction. He was a subject above his Majesty's controul; and as his Majesty had the prospect of being soon called to the throne of England, the Earl, if left in Scotland, might have defeated those schemes of innovation which were now meditated by the King.

Probably the Earl had got private hints of the dangers awaiting him. He left Edinburgh and his estates in East Lothian, and crossed the Forth, to visit his estates in Perthshire.

In Fleming and Mercer's MS. Chronicle in my possession, it is said, " May 20, 1600, John Earl of Gowrie came to Perth, after seven years peregrination in foreign countries." And in that MS.

Chronicle, which was in the possession of the late Mr. James Cant, it is said, "In the year of God, a thousand, five hundred and five score years, my Lord Gowrie came home out of France, and in the month of May, twentieth day, at six hours at even, came to this town with sundry Barons convoy."

William Sanderson, Esquire, who published his history in the year 1656, gives a very unfair representation of the Earl's character, and of his motive of retiring from the Court. He says, "Gowrie, after he came home from abroad, was extraordinary ambitious, proud, and haughty. He was too big in his own thoughts to be comprehended within Court observance. He retired therefore to his family, accompanied by such of his creatures as would descend to observe him. Only, to save appearances, his brother Alexander was left to play the courtier, being of the King's bed-chamber *."

Sanderson was notoriously a party writer. His history abounds with errors, and meets with little credit. The Earl indeed might be accused of being haughty when he seemed to disrelish the conversation of the King, which was vulgar in the ex-

* Sanderson's History, page 226.

treme, and mixed with words of profane swearing. The Earl would not reckon the illiterate Court parasites his fit companions. He had cultivated the various parts of learning, and wished to make farther improvement by study, and to converse with men well educated.

All writers, so far as I have seen, Sanderson excepted, give him the character of being affable and engaging in his manners. He was beloved by all unprejudiced persons, and such persons Sir Robert Douglas seems to have had chiefly in his view, when speaking of the Earl and of his brother, Mr. Alexander Ruthven, he says, in his book of the Peerage, " Their gentle and peaceable dispositions made them to be idolised by all who knew them;" and he had before said, " Nature and education had joined in adorning them, especially the elder, with the most noble accomplishments; more learned than is usual with persons of their rank; more religious than is common in persons at their time of life; generous, brave, popular. Their countrymen, far from thinking them capable of any atrocious crime, conceived the most sanguine hopes of their early virtues*.

* Douglas' Peerage, 306, 307.

Mr. William Cowper, who afterwards was promoted to the see of Galloway, was at the time one of the ministers of Perth. Though he thought it most expedient, for preserving the public peace, to endeavour to vindicate the King in the bloody affair which had lately happened, he could not refrain from saying, in a sermon which he preached after the Earl's death, " He was one whom we loved. What grief his death wrought in me, my conscience beareth record. The loss of no earthly creature ever went so near my heart *."

The Earl had to establish a family of servants in his house at Perth, and another in his castle of Ruthven. He had not the opportunity of being well acquainted with their characters, and some of them, it will afterwards appear, were unfaithful. He had many near relations in Perthshire, who, with other noblemen and gentlemen, came to visit him, and were hospitably entertained; and he lived in a very amicable correspondence with the ministers of the gospel.

Though his residence in Perth continued but a

* Bishop Cowper's MS. Tracts and Sermons in my possession. His forenoon's sermon on the conversion of Zaccheus.

short while, being only, upon the whole, about six weeks, he was attentive there, as was incumbent upon him, to the public business. He acted as Provost of the town, and heritable Sheriff of the county. I find in Fleming and Mercer's MS. Chronicle the following memorandum, which furnishes an instance of his having been employed in his juridical capacity: "June 28, 1600.—The execution of David Drummond, for the slaughter of George Ramsay's man. He was condemned in the first justice court that ever John, Earl of Gowrie, held after his return."

There were not, however, many such courts in which the Earl was present; for it seems to have been in the beginning of July that he went from Perth to Strathbraan, in the district of Atholl, to remain some weeks, it is said, in his castle of Trochrie, and to hunt in the Highland moors. One gentleman whom he took along with him, was his cousin, James Wemyss, younger of Bogie. This young gentleman appears not to have received a very extensive education; and the Earl diverted himself with making him wonder at the marvellous things which he had seen or heard of when abroad,

effected by professed adepts in the knowledge of the secrets of nature *.

While in Atholl, according to Calderwood, the Earl received a letter from the King, inviting him to come and hunt with him at Falkland. He did not comply with the invitation; and, according to Stewart's Collections, he refused, "because he was afraid of being shot, as it were by accident, when engaged in the chace."

King James VI. is generally represented as having been immoderately fond of hunting. It was his annual custom to come to Falkland for that purpose, at the proper season, and, after being some time there, to pass to the deer parks at Stirling. The palace of Falkland was in excellent repair; and its parks, which were called the wood, were well furnished with deer.

It seems to have been in the second week of July 1600, that his Majesty, with a retinue uncommonly large, came to Falkland. According to Stewart's Collections, the Queen and her ladies were there; and, among other noblemen and gentlemen in the retinue, were Ludovick, Duke of

* Wemyss' Deposition.

Lennox, John, Earl of Mar, Lord Inchaffray, Lord Lindores, and Sir Hugh Herries of Cousland, commonly called Dr. Herries. Some of the gentlemen of the bedchamber who attended, were Sir Thomas Erskine, Sir John Ramsay, and Mr. Alexander Ruthven. The King and his nobles spent the mornings in hunting, and the rest of the day in feasting, in conversation with the ladies, and in such other diversions as were then in fashion.

It is proper that I should relate the following court anecdote, which was handed down by tradition. It is inserted in the late Mr. James Cant's notes on "the Muze's Threnodie," and, on the authority of Lord Hailes, was inserted in Pinkerton's Essay on the Gowrie Conspiracy.

It happened that, on a hot sultry day, Mr. Alexander Ruthven, being in the garden at Falkland, was so much overcome with heat, that he lay down under the shade of a tree, and fell fast asleep. For the sake of coolness, he had laid open his neck and breast. The King came into the garden, and, passing that way, stood still to observe him, but was surprised and felt uneasy, when he saw hanging from his neck a ribbon which his Majesty some

time before had presented to the Queen. He did not continue his walk, but went back in bad humour to the palace. He was, however, noticed by one of the Queen's ladies, who was in another part of the garden, and suspected what the King had seen. This lady, I do not hesitate to say, was the Lady Beatrix, Mr. Ruthven's sister. She ran to the place where her brother was lying, and, having snatched the ribbon from his neck, carried it to that part of the palace where she knew the Queen then was.

She found the Queen, who was in the sixth month of her pregnancy of King Charles I. sitting at her toilet. She threw the ribbon on the table before the Queen, and requested her immediately to put it into a drawer, the reason for which she soon would see. Scarcely had the lady retired by one door of the chamber, when the King entered by another, and demanded of the Queen that she would shew him the ribbon which he lately had given her. With great calmness she took it from the drawer, and put it into his hands. He examined it for some time, and then returned it; and, in going away, muttered a vulgar imprecation, saying, " Evil take me, if like be not an ill mark."

The Queen, it must be owned, was in this instance imprudent, and ought not to have given away to a young man the present she had received from her husband. But it would be wrong to accuse her of any criminal intrigue with Mr. Ruthven. He had been piously educated by Principal Rollock; and his sister, the Lady Beatrix Ruthven, the Queen's confidant, was a lady of the strictest virtue.

But an incident of such a kind could not long be concealed, and was spoken of among the courtiers. A true account of it seems to have reached the ears of the King; for he altered his behaviour to Mr. Alexander Ruthven, who, finding that his Majesty was displeased with him, begged and obtained permission to go to the Earl his brother, whether he should be yet in Atholl, or already come to Perth.

A plot, it may be said, was now ripening by the King, and by two or three of his confidential servants, against the two brothers. Calderwood relates, what may be reckoned a premature intimation of it, given by Dr. Sir Hugh Herries to Lady Beatrix Ruthven. That gentleman was so

unfortunate as to have a clubbed foot. She possessed great vivacity of spirit; and as she was one day laughing at what she called his "bowit foot," he, not relishing her gaiety, took her by the hand, and looking into her loof, said, "Mistress, I see that, ere it be long, a sad disaster will befal you." The disaster took place within a few days, when her two brothers were slain, in which bloody affair Dr. Herries was one of the chief actors.

Preparations were made for executing the plot, which, it was determined, should extend not only to the death of the Earl, but also to his being judged a traitor, that so his estates might be forfeited to the Crown, and given away to those persons of whom the King should approve as having done most in his service. A day was fixed for the execution, when the King and his party thought themselves certain that the Earl and his brother would be returned from the Highlands.

According to Calderwood, the King sent a letter or message to William Ruthven, the Earl's brother, next to Alexander, to meet him at Perth on the 5th of August. This young man was with his mother at Dirleton, and happily for himself did

not come. The reason of his not coming was, that the Earl was expected at Dirleton that day*.

That the King might be in no fear of personal danger, from any insurrection of the inhabitants of Perth, David Murray, the comptroller of his Majesty's household, was directed to go to his cousin, Sir John Murray, Baron of Tullibardine, and to require him, in the King's name, to meet the King at Perth, with a powerful party of his friends, at two o'clock in the afternoon of the 5th of August. The Comptroller represented that his Majesty would, on that day, need the assistance of the Baron and his friends, to seize some atrocious rebels, but that, to prevent alarm, the purpose of their coming should be kept private. The Baron did not go himself, but sent his eldest son, William, with three hundred horsemen in arms. It is affirmed, that afterwards the Baron, when he was told of the destruction of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother Alexander, said, "If I had known of the King's real intention, I would have sent none of my friends†." David Moyses, in his Me-

* See my account of the children of William Earl of Gowrie, p. 95.

† Edinburgh MS. p. 8.

moirs, says, "There were five hundred gentlemen that day assembled in the town of Perth *."

Calderwood says, that the reason publicly given by William of Tullibardine, and his friends, for their coming to Perth that day, was, "the bridal of one named George Murray." But he ridicules the pretext, because their number greatly exceeded what was ordinary on such occasions, and because of the rewards which they afterwards received.

I find in the minutes of the church session of Perth, that "June 9, 1600, George Murray in the parochin of Gask, and Marjory Murray, were contracted for marriage, and promised to accomplish their marriage within forty days. Cautioner for the man, Robert Murray; and for the woman, James Murray." The principal feast, after the marriage, when all friends were to assemble, might be held August 5th.

I there also find, that this George Murray, at the time, or immediately after his marriage, was keeping a tavern in Perth; and that April 13, 1601,

† Moyses' Memoirs, p. 309.

his tavern was patronised and frequented by the family of Tullibardine.

I add, that I find also in these Minutes, that in July 1604, the above mentioned William of Tullibardine was married to Lady Dorothea Stewart, heiress of Atholl, and niece of the late John Earl of Gowrie. The Lady's Mother, the Countess Dowager of Atholl, was the late Earl of Gowrie's eldest sister. She was displeased with the marriage, as I have elsewhere observed, and entered a complaint to the Church Session against Mr. William Cowper, the minister of Perth, who had contracted the parties. But the Session, after a formal trial, declared that Mr. Cowper had acted regularly in that affair.

For the farther safety of the King, and for the easier accomplishment of the purpose in view, the persons, to whom I shall now venture to give the the name of conspirators, secured the co-operation of Robert Chrystie, the Earl's porter, who was to open and shut doors and gates, as should be found necessary for promoting the King's intentions. This man had acquired no personal attachment to the Earl, for he had been in his service only five weeks, during which time the Earl had been mostly

in the Highlands. Calderwood tells us, that Chrystie was afterwards rewarded for the good service he had done to the King.

CHAPTER III.

CONTENTS.

The Earl and his brother Alexander arrive at Perth from the Highlands. Lady Margaret Douglas, Mistress of Angus, proposed as a Wife to the Earl. Account of her. His intention of going to Dirleton. Is prevented by the King's Letter to his Brother. Mr. Alexander goes to Falkland, and appears to be graciously received by the King. Anecdote of the Queen. Mr. Alexander hunts with the King. The King informs him he is to ride to Perth. His pretence for the Journey. Anecdote of a Gentleman of the Family of Moncrief. The Earl's employments on the last day of his life. Mr. William Row, Minister of Forgandenny. The Earl's Visitors that day. Andrew Henderson arrives. The Earl's Company at Dinner. Is informed of the King's approach. Master of Oliphant. Mr. William Rhind. The Earl meets the King, who proceeds to Gowrie House. The King's Dinner. Fiction of the Man with a Pot full of Gold. A Description of Gowrie House.

It was Thursday July 31, or Friday August 1, or rather Saturday August 2, 1600, that the Earl of Gowrie, with his brother Alexander, arrived at

Perth from the Highlands. But he did not intend to make at present any long stay in Perth. Whatever hopes he might once have entertained, when at the Court of England, of obtaining in marriage the Lady Arabella Stewart, he appears now to have been convinced that his hopes could not be realised without his incurring the deadly resentment of the King, and his endangering the peace of the country. The King had most probably let him know, in his ungracious manner, that he never would give his consent to that alliance. It may be supposed that the King's refusal was, at least, a disappointment of any ambitious desires he might have been apt to indulge.

We are told by Calderwood, that the Earl's friends now sought to turn his views of marriage to another quarter. They wished him to espouse the Lady Margaret Douglas, the only surviving child of the late Earl of Angus. Her father and Gowrie's father had been constant and confidential friends, and had acted in concert in all their patriotic schemes of policy. But she was only at present twelve years of age, and he never yet had seen her.

According to Calderwood, it was now therefore the Earl's purpose to set out from Perth, on Tuesday August 5th, in his journey to Dirleton, where he was to ask his mother to come and keep house with him; and from thence he was to go to Seaton, the seat of the Earl of Winton, in East Lothian, where he was to see the lady with whom he had been advised to be contracted. Calderwood gives her the title of Countess of Angus; and she was, indeed, by courtesy, sometimes so denominated, but her ordinary denomination was, "the Mistress of Angus." The scheme was a good one: The old Countess of Gowrie was to live, or keep house with her son till the young Lady should be of a proper age. But the scheme was frustrated by the sad catastrophe which happened at Perth on the day of the Earl's intended journey.

Hume of Godscroft informs us that Lady Margaret Douglas died unmarried when she was fifteen years of age *. She no doubt expected that the Earl of Gowrie, if he had lived, would have been her husband; and it appears in a note which Principal Robertson subjoined to his remarks on the

* Hume's History of the Douglasses, page 360.

Gowrie conspiracy, that after the Earl's death she shewed an affectionate concern about the interests of the Gowrie family; for in September 1602, the Earl's brothers, William and Patrick, having come privately to Scotland, to procure if possible that their sentence of banishment should be reversed, and so to recover some of the property which had been forfeited, the Lady Paisley, who was the daughter of George Lord Seaton, and wife of Claud Hamilton, Lord Paisley, and Lady Margaret Douglas, there called "the Mistress of Angus," taking along with them Lady Beatrix Ruthven, disguised as one of their gentlewomen, visited the Queen at the Palace of Holyroodhouse, and intreated her to use her influence with the King in favour of the young men. Lady Beatrix privately remained with the Queen all the night. But the Queen's intercessions with the King did not prevail. He continued inexorable, and the unfortunate brothers again retired to England from whence they had come. After the King's accession to the Crown of England, a proclamation was there issued against the two brothers; William fled to foreign parts, and Patrick was committed to the Tower of London.

In the evening of Monday the fourth of August, when the Earl was preparing for the journey he was to take the next day, he and his brother Alexander were surprised by a letter from the King, in which Alexander was required to be at Falkland early the next morning. The young man was very unwilling to go, for he considered himself as being under the King's displeasure; but, after deliberation, it was judged best that the King's command should be punctually obeyed, to prevent any ground of complaint. That such a letter or message was received is confidently affirmed in the MSS. before me, and by general tradition; and Calderwood says, that "the Earl deferred his journey on account of Mr. Alexander's going to Falkland." He wished first to know what kind of a reception his brother had met with.

Andrew Henderson, the Earl's factor on the estate of Scoon, says, in his depositions, that the Earl ordered him to attend Mr. Alexander Ruthven to Falkland, and to return when his brother should desire him. No doubt the Earl would be anxious to know as early as possible how his brother was received. But it seems not to be certain that Henderson really went to Falkland, or was ordered to

do so, and that in the morning he rather was sent from Perth to Ruthven to transact some business there with the Earl's tenants. It is certain, however, that Andrew Ruthven, a faithful friend, accompanied Mr. Alexander, and that they, and probably some servants with them, were on horseback so early as four o'clock in the morning.

As I do not regard the King's narrative and Henderson's depositions any farther than they are supported by better evidence, I shall give the account of what happened at Falkland, and in the King's journey to Perth, chiefly from MSS. and tradition. Mr. Alexander outrode his companions, and was at Falkland before seven o'clock in the morning. Tradition, and Stewart in his Collections, relate, that the King that morning was sooner than usual in his hunting dress. The Queen asked the reason, and his answer was, He hoped to kill a buck long before the evening. When he returned at night from Perth, and she had heard what had happened there, she wept bitterly, and applied to the death of the Earl and his brother the King's speech about killing a buck. It is added, that in all the after part of her life she was often in tears, and heard to say, that she dreaded the Divine ven-

geance would come on her family, the King's descendants, for his having shed the blood of these two innocent men.

Mr. Alexander, when near to Falkland, rode east between the wood and the town, intending to go directly to the equerry, (that is, to the King's stables.) As he approached he saw the King and his train ready to take their horses. He immediately dismounted, and not having a servant at hand, he tied his horse to a tree in the wood, and walked forward to the place where he saw the King. Being afraid of his Majesty's displeasure, and wishing to conciliate him, he kneeled very humbly before him, and even bowed his head under his Majesty's knees; but the King "clapped him round the neck," that is, fondly embraced him, and spoke to him in a gracious manner. He praised him for the expedition he had used in obeying his command, and after a few more words commanded him again to take his horse and go with him to the hunting. If Henderson was really at Falkland, it was now that he returned to Perth to let the Earl know how well his brother had been received.

In the King's Narrative, there is an account of a long conversation which Mr. Alexander, when upon

his knees, held with the King, importuning him to come to Perth and seize a man who had a pitcher full of gold. But of this conversation there is no other evidence than the King's own word. Mr. Alexander indeed must have been bereft of his senses if he had thought that he could entice the King by a pretence of that kind, especially as he is represented to have said that the Earl his brother was entirely ignorant of the man and of his confinement, and that it was necessary he should know nothing of the matter. The writers of the MSS. before me may have had better information, and, as they reprobate the improbable pretence, I shall also venture to do the same.

Some of the servants who followed the King and his nobles afterwards reported, that, during the chace, they often heard the King calling to Mr. Alexander to ride near him. The construction afterwards put upon the King's repeatedly desiring him to do so was, the King was afraid that Mr. Alexander, suspecting some danger, might slip away from the company, or that, in conversing with others, he might say what was inconsistent with, or contradictory to, the story of the man with the golden treasure, which the King might have already in-

vented, and communicated to two or three of those of his courtiers in whom he was placing the greatest confidence.

It was past ten o'clock before the chace was ended. The King then surprised Mr. Alexander Ruthven, and the generality of his courtiers, by saying that it was his purpose to ride immediately to Perth, to speak with the Earl of Gowrie, but that he would return again in the evening. The generality believed, that it was the King's design to seize at Perth, or in its neighbourhood, the Master of Oliphant, who had lately committed an act of cruel oppression in the county of Angus*. Mr. Ruthven begged that he might be allowed to go before, and inform his brother of the King's intention of riding to Perth. But he was neither allowed to go nor to send a messenger, for the King said, his business there must be kept private till his actual arrival. We are told that Mr. Ruthven presumed to argue with his Majesty, and to say that his brother was that day proposing a journey to East Lothian, and that without a previous notice of his Majesty's intended visit he might be

* King's Narrative, page 10. Moyse's Memoirs, page 274.

gone from home, and at any rate could not be prepared to entertain his Majesty in a suitable manner. The King replied that was a thing of no importance, and that therefore Mr. Ruthven should remain and accompany him in his journey.

The courtiers were all in motion. Some of them remounted their horses, tired as they were, but found it necessary to refresh them, or change them on the road. They followed in detached parties, and some of them did not join the King till after he had arrived in Perth.

Mr. Alexander Ruthven continued pensive, as he also had been all along when he was at the hunting. There was something in his looks which showed that he was suspicious of some deep design in the King's mind. His Majesty affected to be surprised at his looks and behaviour. He asked of Mr. Alexander's brother-in-law, the Duke of Lennox, "What he knew of that young gentleman's nature, and whether he had ever perceived him to be subject to high apprehensions?" The Duke candidly replied, "He knew nothing of him, but as of an honest and discreet gentleman." Then said the King, "You cannot guess, man, the errand

I am riding for. I am going to get a pose in Perth." He then told him a story of a man who had a pitcher full of gold coins of various kinds. The Duke replied, " I do not like the story ; it is not probable." But, said the King, " Take notice where I go with Mr. Alexander, and follow me*."

The following anecdote has been preserved. After the death of the Earl and his brother, the King related to a gentleman of the family of Moncrief how he had been deceived by the pretence of his finding a man with a pot full of foreign gold. The gentleman replied, " A likely like story, if it be true, please your Grace."

When the King and a part of his company were within two miles from Perth, Andrew Ruthven was allowed to go forward to inform the Earl ; and when they were within a mile, Mr. Alexander was allowed for the same purpose to gallop towards the town.

Tuesday, August 5, 1600, was the last day of the Earl of Gowrie's life ; and, from the strict scrutiny which was made after his death, a circumstantial

* King's Narrative, page 11. Lennox's Deposition.

account can be given of the manner in which he spent that day.

In the morning he attended the week-day's sermon in the parish church of Perth*. He was exemplary in his love and regard to the public ordinances of religion; and that day he might have it especially in his view to get his mind piously composed, which had been troubled the night before by the message which his brother had received from the King at Falkland.

The sermon was preached by a neighbouring minister; for the two ministers of Perth, Mr. John Malcolm and Mr. William Cowper, had gone on the preceding day to attend the provincial synod which was to meet at Stirling†.

I apprehend that the minister who preached was Mr. William Row, minister of Forgandenny. His parishioners of the surname of Ruthven were in Perth that day, having been attracted by the cavalcade which accompanied the King in his journey from Falkland. Mr. Row was a man of considerable abilities; he was of a bold spirit, and full

* Tradition. King's Narrative, page 7.

† Minutes of Church Session, Aug. 4, 1600.

of zeal in favour of Presbyterian Church government. If he remained in the town on the fifth of August, he must have been well acquainted with the circumstances of the event which there happened; which may account for the constancy and intrepidity of his conduct in his after trial before the King. He declared that he did not believe that the Earl of Gowrie and his brother were traitors; and that he did not believe that Andrew Henderson had been in the gallery chamber with the King and Mr. Alexander Ruthven. "Henderson," said he, "is suffered not only to live, but is rewarded; whereas, if I had seen the King's life in hazard, and not ventured my own life to rescue him, I think that I should not now deserve to live*."

There should have been a meeting that morning of the Magistrates or Town-Council. But the Earl, as their Provost, sent notice that he could not meet with them, as he was necessarily engaged in some other business*.

The Earl, after his breakfast, was visited about ten o'clock in the forenoon by Peter Hay of Megginch,

* Livingston's Memoirs, page 8.

† Moncrief's Deposition.

and his brother, George Hay of Netherliffe, who was afterwards Chancellor of Scotland. They came, it should seem, to transact some affairs relating to the county. But while they were conversing with him, Andrew Henderson entered the room in his boots. The Earl, who was anxious to receive all possible information concerning his brother, asked him what he knew of the persons who were with the King's Majesty at Falkland. He then took Henderson to his cabinet, perhaps to adjust some money matters before his intended journey to Lothian, and after a certain space he returned to the two gentlemen in the chamber, and told them that the rest of their business must be referred to another day*.

The purpose of the evidence given by the two Mr. Hays was, to show that Henderson had actually been at Falkland. Mr. John Moncrief certified, that south from Perth he met with Andrew Henderson, who told him that he had been two or three miles above the town, that is, west or southwest from Perth†. Henderson, in the course of

* Hay's Depositions.

† Moncrief's Deposition.

his morning ride, especially if he was at any distance to the southward, might naturally have been expected to have heard tidings of what was passing at Falkland, as news from thence would at that time through all the country be the chief subject of the people's inquiry. If Andrew Ruthven had been examined, which, for some unknown reason he was not, he was the person who could have added weight to Henderson's evidence, or have wholly subverted it.

In the same forenoon the Earl was visited by Mr. John Moncrief of Pittcrieff, a brother of William Moncrief of that ilk. His business was to get the Earl to subscribe a Lady's right of confirmation to some effects or heritage. The Earl asked Mr. Moncrief to dine with him*. We are told, in the depositions of the witnesses, that among the other gentlemen who were invited to dinner, besides those who ordinarily dined with the Earl, were James Drummond of Pitcairnis, and Alexander Peebles, Baron of Findowne.

There is no reason to doubt such facts mentioned in the King's Narrative, and in Henderson's

* Moncrief's Deposition.

depositions, as must have been known to a number of witnesses. The Earl's dinner, we are told, was that day later than usual, for it was not till half past twelve o'clock that the first course was served up. George Craigengalt, a faithful servant of the Earl, who should have carried it, was lying sick, and Andrew Henderson acted in his stead.

When the second course was to be served, Andrew Ruthven entered the room, and whispered to the Earl, as it was afterwards imagined, that the King was on his way to Perth, or to some place in its neighbourhood. The Earl did not disturb the company by reporting the information. He probably thought that the King was to turn aside to the road which leads to the castle of Dupplin, or afterwards to the road which leads to the castle of Pithaveless, at one or other of these castles he was to seize the Master of Oliphant, and that the King thought it necessary that his intention should not be divulged. But Calderwood, when speaking of the Earl's domestics, says, " Mr. William Oliphant was not now in the town. He was perhaps a friend of Lord Oliphant, and had absconded with the Master of Oliphant, on their having got notice that the King was on his way from Falkland."

Not long after Andrew Ruthven had delivered his message, Mr. Alexander Ruthven entered, and proclaimed to the Earl and his company that the King and all his Court were at hand. The Earl and his company rose from the table. Mr. William Rhind, one of the company, who had been the Earl's travelling governor, and was still residing with him, anxiously asked the Earl if he knew of any business which the King had to do in Perth; the Earl answered that he knew of none in Perth*.

It was now one o'clock. The Earl, as Provost of the town, and the other magistrates, followed by the principal citizens and other gentlemen, went out to the South Inch, and at the head of it met with the King and paid him their obeisance. The King and his courtiers proceeded straight forward to Gowrie House, where one party after another, with their servants, continued to arrive, till the number of them at last was uncommonly great. The Earl seemed to be uneasy, and evidently did not give them a hearty welcome. He had abundant reasons to be persuaded that the King bore no

* Rhind's Deposition.

good will towards him, and that many whom he now saw along with him were no better disposed.

Such a sumptuous entertainment as would have been suitable to the dignity of the King, and to the Earl's own rank and opulence could not now possibly be provided. Tradition says, that the Earl's servants found it necessary to procure some dishes of meat from a house or tavern in the town, where a feast was preparing for a marriage company. I apprehend it was the tavern of George Murray, where his friends of his own surname were that day to do him honour, by their assembling on account of his late marriage. Calderwood says, that the Earl apologised to the King both for the poverty and the delay of the dinner, by telling him "that he looked not for him till less than an hour before his coming."

It was indeed a full hour, that is, it was two o'clock in the afternoon before the King's dinner was brought in. Calderwood and others have well observed, that during the hour before dinner there was plenty of time for the King to have gone to see the man who had the pot full of gold, if there had really been any expectation of finding such a person. But no mention seems to have been

made of that matter; and no delay should have been used, for the King, in his Narrative, says, that Mr. Alexander, when at Falkland, had told him "that the fellow who was lying bound might cry on his hearing a noise, and thereby the treasure might be lost*." There was now undoubtedly a great noise in Gowrie's Palace and in the Court yard, which such a fellow, if he had been there, must have heard. The story most assuredly may be pronounced to have been of the King's own childish, or, as he thought, wise and witty invention, and never had been heard of either by the Earl of Gowrie or by his brother.

The King, in his Narrative, endeavoured to impress an opinion upon the minds of the public, that it was not his thirst of gold, but his fear that the strange man who possessed the treasure might occasion public mischief, that had induced him to ride to Perth†. But Calderwood replies, "How could such a quantity of gold as was portable in a pot, or in a man's arm, disturb the peace of the country?" Indeed his Majesty, by sending his orders to the

* King's Narrative, page 7. Lennox's Deposition.

† King's Narrative, page 5.

Earl, who was Sheriff of the county, or to the Magistrates of Perth, might easily have secured the treasure, without his taking the trouble of coming for it himself.

For the better understanding of the facts afterwards to be related, it may be proper that I should here stop my narrative till I have given a description of Gowrie's House in Perth, which is the more necessary, because no vestige of it is now to be seen, the house having been entirely demolished in 1807, when a scheme was proposed for making a new street along the west side of the river.

Of old it frequently bore the names not only of Gowrie House, but also of Gowrie Place or Palace. After the forfeiture of the last Earl, it was frequently called the King's House, and latterly the Artillery Barracks.

It was situated on the west bank of the river Tay, in a line with the streets called the Water Street and Spey Street, the first being towards the north, and the other towards the south. From the wide gate in the front, the whole length of the south street was in view.

The east and south ranges of building were of a date immemorial. They were the property of Eli-

zabeth Gray, Countess Dowager of Huntly, at the time of her death, which happened in the year 1526. She had repaired and made some improvements upon them. Their walls were uncommonly thick. Within one of them, in the east range, were two dark closets, capable of holding two or three persons. They were discovered when the stones which concealed them were removed in 1807. One of them contained an earthern urn full of human bones. The other contained an earthern urn, in which was a quantity of dust or of ashes, perhaps of papers consumed by age. On the ground floor of that same east range was discovered a pit, but the entrance to it was blocked up with rubbish which was not removed. Such dreadful places of confinement it is said were often to be found in the old castles, when feuds were frequent in the country. If the King had been thrown into that pit he could not long have survived, but he was conducted by Mr. Alexander Ruthven to that part of Gowrie House which was at the greatest distance from it. Most of the buildings on the west and north sides seem to have been added by the Lords of Ruthven. The middle area or court yard was an oblong of sixty feet from west to east, and of

ninety from south to north. One part of the west side excepted, where the front gate was, the buildings on all sides were complete. Their height originally was of three stories and garrets. But the height on the south range was diminished about a hundred years before the house was entirely demolished, and great and unknown alterations were made in the inner parts when the house and gardens began to be used as military barracks. The large garden extended to the south wall of the town, at the east of which, viz. at the south-east corner of the garden, was the ancient turret, called "The Monks Tower."

In the year 1579 William, the first Earl of Gowrie, who is said to have contracted debts by his taste for grandeur, made some additions to his house in Perth. In the south range especially, he constructed a long and spacious gallery, and adorned it with paintings, which were much admired. Sir John Ramsay, in his deposition, says, he "remained a certain space beholding that fair gallery in which he never had been before." At the west end of the long gallery was a door which opened into what was called "the gallery chamber," and adjoining to that chamber was a small room or

closet which was called "the Earl's study." The chamber and its closet extended partly over the upmost floor of the south body of the building, and wholly over the upmost storey of the south-west tower or turret.

It was to this chamber and closet that Mr. Alexander Ruthven led the King, after he had dined, as to the most honourable place of retirement. The turret afterwards was taken down, but the writers of the MSS. were acquainted with some old people who had seen it standing.

In the north-west corner of the court-yard was a broad stair which led to rooms in the north-west tower, and to rooms in the north range of building. Another broad stair in the south-east corner led to rooms in the east and south ranges. There were also some smaller stairs, one of which is to be particularly noticed, which was at the south-west corner of the court-yard, and led to the north or west door of the gallery chamber and closet. This narrow stair was called "the private and the black turnpike," and appears to have been appropriated to the Earl's use when he chose to go by the nearest way to his closet or study. In this narrow turnpike, the door to which had been purposely left

open by the Earl's porter, Mr. Alexander Ruthven was slain; and by it those persons ascended who put to death John Earl of Gowrie in the gallery chamber.

I have been assisted in this description by the several views of Gowrie House, which were accurately taken in the year 1807 by Dr. John M'Omie, Secretary to "the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth."

CHAPTER IV.

CONTENTS.

Parts of the Plot against the Earl of Gowrie. The King's Dinner. His behaviour. The Earl's behaviour. The Nobles Dine. The King wishes to retire, and goes with Mr. Alexander Ruthven to the Earl's closet, in the Gallery Chamber. The west door of the Gallery locked. A Report was spread that the King was gone for Falkland. One or more Persons had been placed in the Gallery Chamber. The King's menial Servants. Anxiety of the Courtiers to find the King. A Person placed at the door of the Gallery Chamber. Sir Thomas Erskine. Sir John Ramsay. Meikle John Murray. The King appears at the Window, and calls for Help. Andrew Roy, *alias* Ray. Sir Thomas Erskine. Sir John Ramsay. Some of the Courtiers run to the long Gallery. Earl of Gowrie attacked. His consternation. Arms himself. Death of Mr. Alexander. Remarks. The Story of the Garter. Sir Thomas Erskine. Conjecture of what had passed between the King and Mr. Alexander. The dead Body of Mr. Alexander covered with the King's Cloak. The King

locked into the Earl's Study. The Earl and one of his Servants enter, armed, into the Gallery Chamber. His behaviour. His Death. Remarks.

The plot which, I reckon, was now carrying on against John Earl of Gowrie, and his brother Mr. Alexander Ruthven, seems to have consisted of the following parts:

1. The catastrophe in view was, that the Earl and his brother should be put to death, as in a sudden scuffle, in which, however, they were to be made to appear as traitors.

2. The personal safety of the King, and of the persons immediately employed, was to be secured by corrupting some of the Earl's servants, and by bringing a sufficient number of armed gentlemen from the country.

3. A specious pretence was to be contrived for the King's coming to Perth.

How the catastrophe was perpetrated will afterwards appear. I have already noticed the means which were used for the safety of the King, and of the persons he employed. The remaining parts of the plot seem to have been,

1. The King, after his dinner in the Earl of Gowrie's house, was to pretend a necessity for retiring to a private apartment.

2. A report was soon to be raised, that he had gone away to Falkland.

3. When the courtiers were to be assembled on the street, under the windows of the room where the King was, and were making a noise, calling for their horses, then the King was to cry to them, from one of his windows, that his life was in danger.

4. His confidential servants were then to ascend a private stair, left open for the purpose, and to kill first the one brother, and afterwards the other.

5. The fruits of the accomplishment of the plot were to be, that the King would thereby be rid of a powerful, or popular, antagonist to his arbitrary schemes; and as he expected soon to accede to the crown of England, he could leave Scotland, without his being afraid of any successful opposition to the measures he had devised, with regard to his Scottish subjects. Also his needy courtiers would be more firmly devoted to his service, by his having distributed among them Gowrie's forfeited estates.

I now proceed in my narrative. The chamber in which the King dined, was in the northmost part of the east range of the building. He passed to it through the hall, in which the nobles afterwards were to dine. He sat down to dinner about two o'clock in the afternoon, by which time the armed gentlemen from the country were arrived, and even some of them had come to Gowrie's house.

The King thought himself now perfectly safe, and was in high spirits. But the Earl of Gowrie was troubled. He saw his house suddenly, and fully occupied by persons over whom he had no controul, and some of them, he knew, bore no good will towards him. He suspected that the King had some secret design, though he could not clearly conceive what it was.

The manners of former times may be partly learned from the minute account of what happened at the King's dinner. Mr. Alexander Ruthven, who is said to have been one of the gentlemen of the King's bed-chamber, and was generally considered as such, waited behind the King's chair, and with him his Majesty seemed to have a very gracious intercourse. His brother, the Earl, stood

at the other end of the table, pensive and dejected. He could only reply to the King's incessant talk, and coarse pleasantry, by "half words, and imperfect sentences *."

The Earl, it should seem, through ignorance, acted contrary to what was the court fashion. When the King and his retinue were at any time invited to a dinner, it was customary for the entertainer, as soon as the first course was served up to the King, to desire the retinue to dine in another chamber, and to sit with them himself at dinner. This the Earl neglected to do. The nobles were kept standing round the table till the King had ate the greatest part of his dinner. His Majesty noticed the Earl's neglect, and interpreted it to be a marked sign of the dislike which he had to his guests. The servants, however, who were taken by a surprise, may not have found it possible to prepare the dinner for the nobles so early as they had prepared the King's dinner. The Earl at last asked the nobles to dine in the neighbouring hall, and conducted them thither. But he did not sit down to table with them, but returned to

* King's Narrative, page 14.

the King's chamber, where he stood, as before, at the lower end of the table. The Earl had indeed dined before his Majesty's arrival, but his Majesty wondered that he did not show to his guests the ordinary courtesy of sitting and eating with them *.

The King, when his desert was brought in, told Mr. Alexander that he desired to retire to a private apartment. The requisition had been expected, and the place allotted was the Earl's closet, at the top of the south-west tower †.

But the King, before he went, called for a cup of wine, and, addressing himself to the Earl, said, in a merry and homely way, "My Lord, you have seen the fashion of entertainments in other countries, and I will now teach you the fashion in this country, seeing you are a Scottish man. You have forgot to drink to me, and to sit with your guests, and to bid us welcome, but we will now drink our own welcome." He then desired him to give drink to the company in the hall, and in his Majesty's name to bid them welcome ‡.

* King's Narrative, page 15.

† MSS. Tradition.

‡ King's Narrative, p. 15.

The Earl accordingly returned to the hall, where the nobles had nearly dined. Having called for wine, he said, "I am desired by his Majesty to drink his *scoll* (cup of thanks) to my Lord Duke and to the rest of the company." The Earl himself drank, and the wine went round*. Thus the entertainment, in the whole of it, was of an awkward kind. On neither side was there any appearance of cordiality, which would not have been the case if the Earl had been deceiving the King, and harbouring in his mind any traitorous design.

The courtiers, while they were drinking the scoll, observed the King and Mr. Alexander passing through the farther end of the hall. The Duke of Lennox rose to follow them, but the Earl of Gowrie said, "that his Majesty was going up quietly on a quiet errand." It was now about three o'clock in the afternoon, and most of the company left their drinking, and rose from the table. The Earl of Gowrie having asked for the key of his garden, went thither, accompanied by the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Mar, the Lord Lindores, Sir Hugh Harries, and some other gentlemen. They had

* Lennox's Deposition.

not been long there when a report was raised, that his Majesty, instead of lingering in the private apartment, had mounted his horse to return to Falkland. Mr. Thomas Cranston, a domestic of the Earl, came into the garden and intimated the report. The Earl wished to give the King a convoy, and asked for his horse, and Cranston told him that his horse was in the town *.

I was assured, nearly fifty years ago, by an aged person in Perth, remarkably intelligent in historical matters, and to whom an account of the Gowrie conspiracy had been transmitted only through two or three generations, that the King, who was of a cowardly temper, did not venture to go to the Earl's closet with Mr. Alexander, there to be active in the bloody part of the plot, till he was certified that one or more persons had been placed there for his protection. The King had brought with him from Falkland at least four menial servants. According to their own depositions, they were Robert Galbraith, a stout man of thirty years of age; Robert Brown, another menial servant; James Bog, his Majesty's porter; and John Bog,

* Lennox's Deposition.

the keeper of his Majesty's ale cellar. One or all of them may have been stationed in the Earl's closet, with the connivance of Robert Chrystie, the Earl's porter. Even one of them armed was sufficient, if need should be, to overpower Mr. Alexander, who had only a rapier, rusted in the sheath, and which was found upon him undrawn after his death.

Mr. Alexander led the King, not through many doors and houses, which were all locked after them, as the King reported, but up the broad stair to the long gallery, and through it to the gallery chamber and closet. If Mr. Alexander had locked many doors, and put the keys into his pocket, the keys would have been found upon him after his death, when his clothes were searched. But there was no want of keys at that time. The door between the gallery and its chamber had, indeed, been locked, and was kept so till after the death of the two brothers, to prevent the Earl's friends and servants from entering that way, and this was probably done by the Earl's porter, who afterwards gave the key, most probably, to Sir Thomas Erskine.

Mr. Alexander might not be much startled at finding in the gallery chamber one or more of his

Majesty's menial servants attending, especially if the King was still continuing to speak to him in a gracious manner. There was, however, only one of them remaining when Sir John Ramsay afterwards entered the chamber, and this servant instantly disappeared, by running down the narrow turnpike. I delay not to observe, that he could not have been Henderson; for if Henderson had come forth armed, and running from the turnpike into the court yard, he must have been known by many of the people who were there assembled, whose testimony afterwards would have been of the greatest importance in favour of the king.

It is confidently asserted, that it was the Duke of Lennox who alarmed the rest of the courtiers with the report of the King's having gone away. In the morning the King had acted in the same manner at Falkland, by hastily mounting his horse, and leaving his retinue to follow with as much speed as they pleased. The courtiers were all now in motion. Most of them were anxious to have their horses, that they might overtake the King, and some of them were inquiring whether it was true that his Majesty was away. It was but a short time that they were in this state of perplexity, and

what happened in that short time, may be related as follows:

Sir John Ramsay, a page, or young gentleman of the bed-chamber, was sitting after dinner, holding on his arm a hawk, which John Murray of Arknay, commonly called "Meikle John Murray," seems to have that day brought from the country, as a present to the King. He had been late of arriving in the town, and while he was eating his dinner in Gowrie's house, Ramsay gratified him by taking care of the hawk. On the alarm being given that the King was missing, Ramsay, still holding the hawk, went up the broad stair to the long gallery, and stood a little while admiring it, as he never had been in it before. When he came down to the court yard, he declared that the King was not to be found *.

The Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Mar, and the Earl of Gowrie, kept by each other. They asked Robert Chrystie, the porter, if it was true that the King was away. He probably had been the person who had first been employed in raising the false report, but now he affirmed that the King

* Ramsay's Deposition. Murray's Deposition.

was still in the house. "Billy," said the Earl of Mar, "tell us the verity."—"In truth," said the porter, "the king is still in the house. He could not have gone by the back gate, without my knowing it, for I have the keys of all the gates of the place." "Knave," said the Earl of Gowrie, who, no doubt, wished in his heart, that his Majesty had been really away, "thou liest, for his Majesty is always the first to mount his horse. But stay my Lord Duke, and drink," (viz. in the hall,) "and I will go up and learn the verity." He accordingly went up the broad stair to the gallery, and "incontinent," that is, immediately after, returned and said the King was away *.

My conjecture is, that some person had been directed to stand in the gallery, at the door of the gallery chamber, to deceive the Earl of Gowrie and other inquirers, by false intelligence, till the retinue should be put into that state of noise and confusion which was necessary for the King's purpose. It is difficult to give a distinct and regular detail of the transactions of that day, for the depositions are extremely superficial, and, therefore, in many points

* Chrystie's Deposition. Lennox's Deposition.

defective. They are much more so than they would have been if the witnesses had been cross examined, and the friends of the Earl and of his brother had been allowed, and called, to bring forward any exculpatory evidence. But the King was a party; he had published a narrative of facts: and his character of veracity, and of his justice as a Sovereign, was to be deeply implicated in the issue of the trial.

I here reckon it proper to advert to a part of the evidence given by Sir Thomas Erskine. In his deposition, he says, "When all was over, I said to his Majesty, I thought your Majesty would have concredited more to me, than to have commanded me to await your Majesty at the door, if you had thought it not meet to take me with you*." It would appear from this, that he had been seen waiting at the door of the gallery chamber, and after the affair was over, thought it necessary so to speak to the King, lest some people should suspect his want of zeal. The King, in his answer, apologized, by throwing the blame on Mr. Alexander Ruthven.

* Erskine's Deposition.

. It is possible that the command given by the King about keeping the door of the chamber was a part of the information referred to by Nicholson, the English agent in Scotland, in his letter, dated September 22d, 1602. In this letter, he represents that a great suspicion had arisen in the mind of the King, on his having learned that his Queen had communicated to Lady Beatrix Ruthven, one of the sisters of the late Earl of Gowrie, some secrets which had been told to her by Sir Thomas Erskine. King James' Queen always avowed that she favoured the Gowrie family; and she may have so far cajoled Sir Thomas Erskine as to draw from him a confession of some private facts in which he was concerned in the late conspiracy *.

There was now a noise and tumult on the street, under the windows of the room where the King was, occasioned by the nobles calling for their horses. It was therefore the proper time for the King to proceed to the execution of his part of the plot, by his calling for assistance. The south-west window, which was that of the closet, was before open, but now, as we are told by Andrew

* See a note in Robertson's Remarks on the Gowrie Conspiracy.

Roy, alias Ray, who, at the time, was the fourth, or youngest bailie of the town of Perth, and who, ever since the King's arrival at Perth, had been lingering in and about Gowrie house, "Suddenly the long front window, at the northern side of the turret, was driven open." He continues to say, in his deposition, "I saw clearly his Majesty shoot forth his head and arm at the foresaid window, and heard his Majesty crying loudly, Fy! fy! Treason! treason! Help, Earl of Mar! Whereupon, I being very agast, and wonderfully astonished, at that cruel and terrible sight, and pitiful and woful cry, I not knowing what the matter meant, but perceiving his Majesty in extreme and great danger, ran with all possible diligence through the streets, crying loudly, Fy! fy! Treason against the King! For God's sake, all honest men haste, and relieve the King! And I commanded to ring the common bell, that all men might come in haste to his Majesty's relief*." The people were thereby roused to attend the fray; but, before any great number of them could assemble, the Earl and his brother were slain.

* Roy's Deposition.

. The account given by the Duke of Lennox, in his deposition, is as follows: "He," viz. the Duke, "the Earl of Gowrie, and the Earl of Mar, and whole company, were standing on the street, at the fore gate of the lodging, advising where they should seek the King. Incontinent the Duke heard a voice, and said to the Earl of Mar, This is the King's voice that cries, be he where he will. And so they all looked up to the lodging, and saw his Majesty looking forth of the window, wanting his hat; his face being red, and an hand gripping his cheek and mouth; and the King cried, I am murdered! Treason! My Lord Mar, help*!" His Majesty's face might well be red, even from terror, considering the unusual personal exertion he was now making. If, as it is most reasonable to suppose, it was Mr. Alexander's hand which was gripping his cheek, it was natural for the young man so to use his hand for the preservation of his own life. It is said, in Stewart's Collections, "When the King looked over the window, Mr. Alexander stood, waiting at a distance; but little did the innocent youth know, that the King's call-

* Lennox's Deposition.

ing treason was like the last toll of his dead bell."

As might have been expected, all were now anxiously alert for the King's safety. The Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Mar, with others in their company, knowing that the King and Alexander Ruthven had gone up the broad stair to the gallery, repaired thither, but found the door from the gallery into the gallery-chamber locked, which had been done by the Earl's porter, as was before observed; and they could not open it, or break it through, though they used hammers for the purpose. But Sir John Ramsay, having previously been made acquainted with the entrance by the black turnpike, ascended that narrow stair to the door at the other side of the chamber, and succeeded in finding the King *.

The Earl of Gowrie, who was standing on the street before the lodging, and who had his cloak about him, and no sword, was, to his astonishment, instantly attacked by Sir Thomas Erskine, James Erskine his brother, and George Wilson, servant of the said James. They gripped

* Sundry Depositions.

him by the neck, and said, "Traitor, this is thy deed! Thou shalt die." The Earl pleaded, "What is the matter? I know nothing *." We are told, in Stewart's Collections, that the Earl would then have been slain, if his friends and servants had not rescued him. Calderwood tells us, "that Alexander Ruthven of Forgan," (viz. Freeland,) who had no sword at the time, drove Sir Thomas Erskine to the ground by the violence of a buffet." And we are further told, in the foresaid Collections, that the Earl devoutly appealed to God, saying, "O! my God, what can all this mean?"

Access to the court-yard was now denied him. Perceiving that his life was sought after, though he could not devise the reason, and having no sword upon him, he thought it necessary that he, and his friends and servants, should be armed for their own safety. He ran "the space of half a pair of but-lands, to Glenorchie's house, where he got two swords." From thence he went, it is said, to the house of Andrew Henderson, and there procured a steel bonnet, which, when he was on the street, was "tyed upon his head by a lackquey."

* Lindore's Deposition.

Thus armed, and followed by Mr. Thomas Cranston, who also had a drawn sword, he ran back to the court-yard, crying, " I will either be at my own house, or die by the way*." His entrance at the gate was not now opposed; but before this time, though he did not know of it, his brother Alexander was slain.

The manner of Mr. Alexander Ruthven's death may be thus related. Sir John Ramsay, the King's page, who was about twenty-three years of age, still bearing the King's hawk on his arm, ran up the black and narrow turnpike. At the top of it he burst open, by using all his force, the door on that side of the gallery-chamber. Henderson, however, takes to himself the praise of having previously thrown that door open for the admission of his Majesty's servants. In this, therefore, his and Ramsay's depositions do not agree. Ramsay, having violently drove open the door, saw the King, and a man standing behind him. Ramsay says, that he did not know who the man was; but after Mr. Alexander had been stricken once with Ram-

* Lindore's Deposition; Chrystie's Deposition; Henderson's Second Deposition; Peebles' Deposition.

say's whinger, (dagger,) the man suddenly went away *.

The situation in which Ramsay found the King and Mr. Alexander is thus described: "Mr. Alexander was upon his knees, with his head under the King's arm, and endeavouring with his hand to stop the King's mouth." Calderwood says, "Mr. Alexander Ruthven was thrice as strong as his Majesty." The King, from his infancy, was of a weakly constitution, which he endeavoured to strengthen by the frequent exercise of hunting. The age of Mr. Alexander, at this time, was nineteen years and about seven months. It seems therefore certain, that the advantage which the King now had over him, was the effect, not of a superior bodily strength, but of the young man's veneration of his Majesty, and of his own apprehension of danger. His posture was that of a supplicant †.

No words now spoken by Mr. Alexander are related. The King did not accuse him of any particular crime, nor commit him a prisoner, to be af-

* Ramsay's Deposition; Henderson's Second Deposition.

† Ramsay's Deposition; Henderson's Deposition.

terwards tried; which could easily have been accomplished, because of the young man's defenceless condition. The King's immediate words were, "Fy! strike him laigh (low), because he has a pyne-doublet (plaitted doublet) upon him*." Mr. Alexander may have put on such a doublet in the morning when he went to Falkland, suspecting that it might there be necessary for his safety.

The King having given the cruel words of command, Ramsay cast away the hawk from him, and having drawn his dagger, struck with it the almost prostrate young man. But it appears that he did not aim at the lower part of his body, but wounded him in the neck and head. The King then dragged the unresisting youth to the stair-head, and having returned, was so cold blooded, and so much at his ease, that he kept his foot upon the leash of the hawk to prevent it from flying away. But Ramsay, immediately after he had wounded Mr. Alexander, looked out from the window, and seeing Sir Thomas Erskine, who was waiting for the signal, cried aloud, "Fy! Sir Thomas, come up this turnpike, even to the head†."

* Ramsay's Deposition.

† Ramsay's Deposition.

Sir Thomas, being followed by Dr. Sir Hugh Herries, and George Wilson, the servant of James Erskine, ran to the narrow turnpike, where, having ascended five steps, they met Mr. Alexander bleeding in two parts of his body, viz. his head and neck. "Fy!" said Sir Thomas, "this is the traitor; strike him." The other two then mortally stabbed the bleeding young man. He fell on the stair, and in falling, or having fallen, he turned to them his face, and said, "Alas! I am not the wyte of it." Thus he declared his innocence with his dying breath, and laid the blame of what had happened on the King. He had been piously educated under Principal Rollock. He did not, indeed, live long enough to be engaged in the national transactions, but his friends had conceived the best hopes concerning him. His dispositions of mind were amiable, and he was beloved by all who were acquainted with him.

In the whole progress and execution of what I have ventured to represent as the plot of the King, it may, I think, be observed, that Sir Thomas Erskine seems to have determined not to shed any

* Erskine's Deposition.

blood with his own hands. Distinguished honours were afterwards conferred upon him, both in Scotland and in England. But these may have proceeded, not only from the gratitude, but also from the fear of the King, lest otherwise he should be prevailed on to disclose some facts relating to the death of Gowrie and his brother, which the King wished should remain unknown. The same may have been the case with him, as Mr. Oldmixon alleges was the case with another gentleman. That author says, "Among the best of the King's favourites was Sir George Hume, the new Earl of Dunbar. He was the reigning favourite when the King came to England, and it was said that he procured that favour by his concealing what he knew of Gowrie's conspiracy *."

It is now proper that I should advert to what may have passed between the King and Mr. Alexander Ruthven while they were in the gallery chamber. I set aside the relation given in the King's narrative, and in the depositions of Andrew Henderson, for this among other reasons, that in some important points they are inconsistent with

* Oldmixon's Hist. p. 14.

and contradictory to each other. Also there was no time for the long conversations they mention, and for Mr. Alexander's going out and in to meet with the Earl his brother. It was only a short time that the King and the young man were together. It was very soon after dinner that the report was spread of the King's having gone away to Falkland; and the incidents which ensued seem to have happened all at once, or were crowded together within the compass of a few minutes.

I conjecture that the King continued to speak to Mr. Alexander in a gracious manner, till he knew that the nobles were all in motion. The unfortunate young man might suspect nothing bad to happen when the King looked out at the window, till he heard him cry aloud that there was treason. If his Majesty sooner altered his behaviour, and sought to provoke the youth to anger, he might reprove him, in very sharp terms, for his intimacy with the Queen; might reproachfully complain of the political conduct of his ancestors; and speak harshly of the Earl, his brother, for his inordinate ambition in seeking to be married to the Lady Arabella Stewart.

Of old, the floors of houses were frequently covered with rushes, hay, or fresh straw, as we now cover them with carpets. At the outside of the gallery chamber was lying some "bent," or rushes, and among it was found a belt with which the rushes had probably been tied. When this was shewed to the King, he immediately said, "It is the belt, or garter, with which Mr. Alexander Ruthven attempted to bind my hands till he should put me to death." It was afterwards one of the treasonable circumstances inserted in the King's narrative. But it might as well have been said, "This is the belt, or garter, with which the King, and the strong armed man in the closet, sought to bind Mr. Alexander's hands *."

Mr. Alexander's dead body was dragged up the narrow stair, and laid on the floor of the gallery chamber, where it was expected the Earl of Gowrie would soon arrive. The King was locked by the persons who were with him into the closet, as a place of safety; but before he went, he gave them his cloak, and with it the dead body on the

* King's Narrative, p. 25. Henderson's first Deposition. Graham's Deposition.

floor was covered. It was a device contrived to deceive and confound the Earl when he should enter *.

The persons now in the gallery chamber, were Sir Thomas Erskine, Sir John Ramsay, Dr. Sir Hugh Herries, and George Wilson. They had all been concerned in the recent death of Mr. Alexander Ruthven. The Earl soon arrived, armed as before mentioned, and followed by his principal domestic Mr. Thomas Cranston. After some opposition made to them, at the door of the chamber, they were allowed to enter.

Sir Thomas Erskine says, he heard the Earl at his entry, speak some words, but he did not understand them. Tradition and MSS. say, the words were, " Where is the King, I am come to defend him." The company pointed to the dead body on the floor, which was covered with the King's cloak, and, according to Lord Cromarty's account, said, " You have killed the King, our Master, and will you now take our lives?" The Earl stood astonished. He no longer offered any resistance, but putting the points of his two swords

* Sanderson's History, page 228.

to the floor, cried, "Ah! Wo is me! has the King been killed in my house?" Sir John Ramsay immediately pierced him to the heart with a sword or dagger. The Earl leaned upon one of his swords, and Cranston, or some other person, helped to hold him up, but he fell upon the floor, and instantly expired *.

In the King's narrative, it is said, "The Earl died without crying upon God †." But he had been pierced to the heart; and his friends had the satisfaction to know, that during his whole life his morals were pure and exemplary, and he had always been shewing a strict regard to religion. Even in the time of the tumult, on the day of his death, he was expressing his devout temper of mind, "O my God!" said he, "what can all this mean?"

He did not enter the chamber as a conspirator against the King, but was professing the contrary. It appeared to be his wish to know the real nature of the riot which had taken place in his house, and who they were that were most to be blamed. It was a cowardly action to wound him mortally,

* Erskine's Deposition. Sanderson's Hist. page 228. Cromarty, page 29.

† King's Narrative, page 30.

when he was making no resistance, especially if it be true, what often has been alleged, that he was wounded through the back. If there had been no pre-concerted plan for the immediate taking of his life, he could easily have been secured, and afterwards brought, if there seemed good ground for it, to a justiciary trial. The King, in consequence of the whole affair, and of some other deeds of a similar kind, which were parts of what he called king-craft, lost the confidence and good opinion of a vast number of his subjects, who otherwise would have loved and respected him, for the blessing they enjoyed, during his reign, of being at peace with all other nations.

CHAPTER V.

CONTENTS.

An unsuccessful attempt made by the Earl's Friends. The King's Prayer. Dispositions of the People, and of the Rulers of the Town. The Pockets of the deceased Earl and his Brother searched. Discovery of the Mystical Papers. Account of the Earl's Friends and Servants. The dead Bodies of the Earl and his Brother committed to the care of the Magistrates. The King privately leaves Gowrie House. His obligations to the young Laird of Tullibardine. His return to Falkland. Different Reports sent to Edinburgh. The People of Dundee. Mr. William Cowper. Strange Noises and Apparitions. Davidson's Memorials. The King's Voyage to Leith. Mr. Patrick Galloway calumniates the late Earl of Gowrie.

Scarcely had the Earl of Gowrie expired, when three of his friends, with drawn swords, came up the narrow turnpike to the door of the gallery chamber, declaring it to be their purpose to defend him against his enemies. They were repulsed. Two

of them were wounded in the scuffle, and all of them, together with Mr. Thomas Cranston, who before had been wounded, were driven down the stair, and the people below beheld them coming from it.

At the opposite door of the gallery chamber, were the Duke of Lennox, the Earl of Mar, and sundry other courtiers, knocking for admittance. They detached Robert Brown, a servant of his Majesty, to inform his Majesty, that they, who were his friends, were waiting to be admitted. Brown, when he entered, saw the dead body of the Earl of Gowrie lying on the floor. Having delivered the message he had received, the door was opened to the nobles, and after their entrance, again was locked. Now the King, the affair having succeeded to his wish, and being in perfect safety, came forth from the closet. Conformable to the religious part of his character, he kneeled upon the floor, and all the nobles followed his example. His Majesty was the speaker. "He praised God for the victory he had obtained, and for his miraculous deliverance from peril. At the same time expressing his hope, that his life had been preserved for his perfecting some greater work, which would re-

dound to the glory of God, and to the good of the people who were committed to his charge *." The greater work which he had in contemplation, seems to have been the abolition of presbytery, and the establishment of prelacy.

Another party, who were anxious for the Earl's safety, now came to that door at the west end of the gallery, by which the nobles had entered, but was now again locked, to prevent the Earl's friends from entering. As the nobles in the chamber refused to open the door, these persons assaulted it with hammers. The partition was of timber, and they thrust under the door, and through the sides of it, the points of their swords and their halberts. " Meikle John Murray of Arknay, a servant or vassal of the Baron of Tullibardin, being with the nobles in the gallery chamber, was wounded in the leg by one of the swords. Mr. Alexander Ruthven, one of the sons of Alexander Ruthven of Freeland, cried through the key hole to the Duke of Lennox, " My Lord Duke, for God's sake tell me, how is my Lord Gowrie." The Duke an-

* Brown's Deposition. King's Narrative, page 18. Lennox's Deposition.

swered, " He is well. But thou art a fool. Go thy way, for thou wilt get little thanks for thy present labour *."

But the noise at the door soon ceased. The persons there, and all other persons who were thought to favour the Earl of Gowrie, were driven from the house, and from the court yard, and the great gate was shut against them, and strongly guarded. There was, however, much noise on the street. In consequence of Bailie Roy's proclamation formerly noticed, a great number of the town's people had assembled, and were continuing to do so; and though the bailie had enjoined them to come and assist the King, the generality of them were not disposed to believe that the Earl could in any respect be blameable. They were clamorous in his behalf. They were chiefly indeed persons of inferior rank; for the rulers of the town, and some of the principal citizens, well knew that the King expected they would remain quiet. There was also in the town an armed party of horsemen from the country, sufficient to subdue any dangerous insurrection, but their exertions were not to be required, except in a case of extreme necessity.

* Lennox's Deposition.

Bailie Andrew Roy, who had made the before noticed proclamation, at the mercat cross, says, "I returned with all possible diligence, and a great number of people with me, and came before the foresaid turret and window, where I had seen his Majesty first cry out. I cried out, 'How is the King?' My Lord Duke, and my Lord of Mar, answered, 'The King is well.' Praised be God. Then I cried again to his Majesty, and shewed his Majesty, that the bailies and township were come in all haste to relieve and supply his Majesty; and therefore besought his Majesty to command what was his Majesty's will, and best to be done. His Majesty beckoned forth his hand to me and to the people, commanding me to cause the people retire to their lodgings, which commandment I incontinent obeyed, and commanded all manner of men to retire themselves to their lodgings. I likewise passed to the mercat cross, and by open proclamation, commanded, in his Highness' name, that all men should retire to their lodgings, under the pain of treason to them who should not obey my charge*." But the people did not wholly disperse, till the King

* Roy's Deposition.

left the town at eight o'clock in the evening. Roy's deposition was dated at Perth, October 13, 1600. One of the persons who subscribed as witnesses, was "Mr. Patrick Galloway, minister to his Majesty," who was now exercising his great and singular talents, to procure evidence against the Earl of Gowrie.

While the people were tumultuous on the street, the King and his confidential servants were consulting what account of the whole affair should afterwards be published. It was agreed, that the Earl and his brother should be pronounced traitors, that so the family estates might be forfeited. But the story from which it should appear that they were traitors, does not seem to have been then fully devised.

The pockets of the deceased brothers were now searched. Tradition says, that in the pocket of Mr. Alexander Ruthven, was found the letter in which the King had enjoined him to come that morning to Falkland. This letter was immediately destroyed. Calderwood relates, that in the Earl's pocket was found the King's letter in which the Earl had been invited to hunt with the King at

Falkland. This letter also was immediately destroyed.

But what was reckoned a great and important discovery, was made by Sir Thomas Erskine. He took from the pocket of the Earl of Gowrie's girdle, two sheets of paper stitched in a little book of near five inches long, and three broad, full of magical spells and characters, " which none can understand," says Lord Cromarty, " but those who exercise that art *." And we are informed in the King's narrative, that " the wound whereof the Earl died did not bleed, while these papers were upon him, but after they were taken away it bled in great abundance, to the admiration of all the beholders †." I delay at present the consideration of the words written in these papers, or little book.

For the sake of accuracy, I shall give the following list of the Earl's friends and servants, who appeared with swords for his defence, on the day of his death.

1. Mr. Alexander Ruthven. In the act of Attainder, he is denominated, " Alexander Ruthven,

* Cromarty, page xiii.

† King's Narrative, page 18.

son lawful to Alexander Ruthven of Freeland." His father was the grand uncle of John Earl of Gowrie, and is said to have died in the year 1600. Douglas, in his book of the Peerage, makes no mention of this second Alexander, and probably he was not the eldest son. Calderwood denominates him, "Mr. Alexander Ruthven of Forgan."

It was this gentleman, who, when he had no sword, beat down with a buffet Sir Thomas Erskine, who had attacked the Earl of Gowrie. He did not go up to the door at the head of the narrow turnpike, but afterwards went up the broad stair to the opposite door, where he had the brief conference with the Duke of Lennox which I have already related. When he was driven, with other suspected persons from the court yard, and standing on the street, most probably with a sword, among the people, having heard the certainty of the Earl's death, he was filled with so much grief and indignation, as made him, according as Calderwood relates, cry up, "Come down, thou son of Signior Davie. Thou hast slain an honester man than thyself." He was attainted, November 15, 1600. But Calderwood tells us, that "many years after, he obtained the King's pardon, and died in peace."

2. Henry Ruthven. In the act of attainder, he is denominated " Hary Ruthven, son lawful to Alexander Ruthven of Freeland." Douglas does not mention him in his book of the peerage. He was one of those who went up the narrow turnpike, and was seen coming from it, with a drawn sword in his hand. This young gentleman was attainted, November 15, 1600, and very probably at that time left the country.

3. Hugh Moncrieff. In the act of attainder, he is denominated " Hugh Moncrief, brother of William Moncrieff of Moncrieff." In Lennox's Deposition, he is described as being " a black man." He was one of those who went up the narrow turnpike, and was seen coming from it with his drawn sword in his hand, and his face bloody. He was attainted, November 15, 1600, but afterwards obtained the King's peace. Douglas, in his book of the Baronage of Scotland, makes particular mention of him. He obtained charters of some lands, and died without issue, sometime after the year 1624.

4. Patrick Eviot. In the act of attainder he is denominated " Patrick Eviot, brother to Colin Eviot of Balhousie." He was one of those who went

up the narrow turnpike, and was seen coming from it with his drawn sword in his hand, and his head bleeding. He was attainted, November 15, 1600, but afterwards obtained the King's peace.

Some farther particulars relating to this gentleman may be added. The family of the Eviots of Balhousie and Muirton, had existed in the neighbourhood of Perth some hundreds of years. The lairds were benefactors to the religious houses in Perth, and some of the younger sons were in clerical orders.

The death of the above mentioned Patrick Eviot was disastrous. I find in Fleming and Mercer's Chronicle, in my possession, that he had married a great heiress; but her behaviour was bad. Having carried on a criminal intercourse with a man named James M'Nair, they, that they might be married together, and that the man might enjoy her estates, conspired against her husband. While Patrick Eviot, April 8, 1608, was lying asleep in his bed at Benchilles, M'Nair shot him dead with a gun. The woman and her paramour were hanged in the Hayfield, a little west from the town, and their bodies afterwards were burned to ashes.

Only the man's head and arm were reserved, and placed upon the Port of the Castle-gavel.

About the year 1618, the estate of Balhousie was purchased by a gentleman named John Mathew; and in the year 1632, that, and the adjoining estate of Muirton, were purchased by Mr. Francis Hay, nephew of the Chancellor of Scotland, George Hay, Earl of Kinnoul. After that time, the name and family of Eviot became extinct.

5. Mr. Thomas Cranston. Calderwood says, that he was brother to Sir John Cranston of that ilk. Douglas does not mention him in his book of the Peerage. As the epithet "Mr." is affixed to his name, it should seem that he was a man of letters, and had acquired an academical degree. He lived with the Earl of Gowrie, probably as his secretary, and as a literary companion.

He is often mentioned in the Transactions of the fifth of August, 1600. Calderwood assures us, that he was the only person who went up the narrow turnpike, along with the Earl of Gowrie, and that he was present in the gallery chamber, at the time of the Earl's death. He then hurt with his sword, the right hand of Sir Thomas Erskine, but he himself, at the same time, was severely wounded. When

driven down the stair with the other three friends who had afterwards ascended, he delivered in the court yard to Peter Burrell, one of the burgesses, his sword, and might afterwards be considered as a prisoner.

He was capitally tried, perhaps by torture, according to the savage custom which then prevailed, and was executed at Perth, August 23, 1600. But during his trial, and at the time of his death, he denied all knowledge of any traitorous conspiracy, and solemnly declared, that he had no intention to hurt or to oppose the King, but only to protect the Earl, his master, against the unjust attacks of his enemies.

6. George Craigengelt. He was an old and faithful servant of the Earl of Gowrie. He was lying sick in his bed when the tumult began, but he immediately arose, and appeared with a drawn sword among the people. Calderwood tells us, that he cried up to the nobles, "Give us out our provost, or the King's Green Coat shall pay for it." He was capitally tried and executed at Perth, August 23, 1600. He denied all knowledge of a traitorous conspiracy.

7. Donald M'Duff. He was the Earl's baron officer of Strathbraan, and had probably in the week preceding, accompanied the Earl from that part of the Highlands. I find nothing concerning him in the depositions; but he must have appeared with a drawn sword among the people, for he was afterwards capitally tried and executed at Perth, August 23, 1600. He denied all knowledge of a traitorous conspiracy.

8. Walter Crookshanks. He was the Earl's lacquey or page. He was seen in the street, putting a steel bonnet on the Earl's head. Afterwards he was seen in the court yard, with a drawn sword in his hand. But he was considered only as a boy, and was not capitally tried.

Calderwood tells us, that Andrew Ruthven, who in the morning, had accompanied Mr. Alexander to Falkland, had no sword or offensive weapon during the fray; that the same was the case with George Dewar, who bore the office of being the Earl's carter; that Mr. Robert Oliphant, who was of the Earl's household, was not in St. Johnston, (Perth;) and that Henry Younger, another of the Earl's household, was that day in Dundee, and in two or three days after was barbarously murdered.

All these were faithful servants. But Andrew Henderson, the Earl's factor, afterwards gave a false deposition, and among other rewards, was continued factor at Scoon. Robert Chrystie, the Earl's porter, was unfaithful, and was rewarded by being made porter of the palace of Scoon; and another servant of the surname of Dogie, was made a waiter at Scoon.

Thus, there were only eight persons, one of them a boy, who appeared with swords in defence of the Earl of Gowrie on the day of his death. Their attempts were feeble and mostly disunited; and all of them were ignorant of any traitorous design.

The dead bodies of the Earl and his brother, after they had been carefully examined, were committed to the care of the magistrates of Perth, to be produced when required, before the Lords of Parliament. They were kept in Perth nearly three months; for this, it is said, in Fleming and Mercer's M.S. Chronicle, "October 30, 1600, the corpses of the Earl of Gowrie, and his brother, were transported to Edinburgh, to the Parliament to be holden on the first of November."

There was some difficulty in determining the manner in which the King should leave Perth. A

great number of people were still on the street, and at the gate of Gowrie house. It was therefore judged most advisable, that, if possible, he should leave the house without their knowledge. According to Stewart's Collections, William of Tullibardine, with his three hundred armed horsemen, were drawn up on the South-inch. They were joined by a part of the King's retinue; and at eight o'clock in the evening, his Majesty, with two or three of his nobles, unseen by the multitude, went down some steps which led from the garden to the river. A boat was there to receive them, which carried them by water to that part of the South-inch, where their horses and their friends were. The King then mounted his horse, and, surrounded by his strong and numerous guard, went on his way to Falkland.

The services which the party from the country that day rendered to his Majesty, is taken notice of by many writers, especially by Nisbet, in the Appendix to the second volume of his Heraldry. He there says, that "the citizens of Perth, having heard that the Earl of Gowrie, their Provost, was slain, rose in a tumult. In all probability, considering their numbers, and the ferment they were in,

they would have cut the Court in pieces, if the young laird of Tullibardin, who was accidentally in the town that day, had not interposed with his retinue, and he and his friends carried off the King and all that were with him safe to Falkland*."

We learn, that while the King was making his escape by water, Alexander Blair, younger of Balthayock, guarded, with a party under his command, the gate of Gowrie house. An old M.S. Chronicle, which was in the possession of the late Mr. James Cant, narrates as follows: "The Earl of Gowrie, and his brother the Master of Ruthven, were slain in Perth, in anno 1600, in the Earl's own lodging, on the fifth of August, by the King's page, John Ramsay, in presence of the King and the Duke Stewart, and the Earl of Mar and Tullibardin. The Laird of Balthayock was made to keep the yett of the lodging till the King louped on," that is, till the King had mounted his horse.

According to the King's narrative, "The night was very dark and rainy. He was met, in his progress, by persons of all ranks, with great joy and

* Nisbet, Vol. ii. Appendix, page 200.

acclamation." The news of the conflict at Perth had been quickly spread through the country, and the characteristic loyalty of the Scottish people made many of them to haste to congratulate him on his safety. The news had reached Falkland before his arrival there. It may easily be conceived, that the grief of lady Beatrix Ruthven, for the death of her brothers, was excessive, and that the Queen also was in tears.

A very good man, Mr. David Lindsay, minister of Leith, and who was a favourite of the King, was then with the Court at Falkland. He heard the King relate the transactions of the day, and gave implicit credit to every word which his Majesty had spoken. He left the court early the next morning, and proclaimed in Edinburgh what the King had related. David Moyses, who was of the King's household, and addicted to the writing of memoirs, was also with the court at Falkland. He wrote a hasty memoir of what had happened, which was next day carried to Edinburgh. But, in some respects, it differed from what the King had represented. But the account which he afterwards affixed to his book of Memoirs, accorded better with the King's representation. What was called an

authentic report, was also immediately dispatched by the King to Edinburgh.

At Perth, that same night, or early next day, there was some danger to the inhabitants, but it was happily of a short continuance. It was from a quarter which they had not suspected. It will be found mentioned in an extract, which I am about to give from an old MS. Chronicle. Indeed, except in such Chronicles, I have met with nothing in the writs at Perth concerning the Gowrie conspiracy. It was not safe to insert in the public Records, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical, any thing prejudicial to the character of the King; and the respect which was generally paid to the Gowrie family, prevented the insertion of any thing prejudicial to the character of the Earl. Even in the Chronicles, though the part of the Earl seems to have been taken, the expressions used were extremely cautious.

In Fleming and Mercer's MS. Chronicle in my possession, I have found the following cautious and brief account of the bloody affair: "*Slaughter of the Earl of Gowrie.* Quinto Augusti, 1600, the slaughter (happened) of John Earl of Gowrie, and

of Mr. Alexander his brother, in the Earl's own lodging in Perth, by John Ramsay and Doctor Harries, his Majesty's servants. Praised be God the King was safe from their *intended* treason. The town knew nothing, till the common bell rung. The town of Dundee being advertised, came all up in arms to have spoyled the burgh of Perth. But praised be God, the King *knew* the town of Perth's part to be free."

If a previous advertisement had been given to the town of Dundee, the citizens from thence may have arrived in arms, not after the affair was over, but early in the day, according to a preconcerted plan for the farther security of the King.

Mr. William Cowper, who was then one of the ministers of Perth, and afterwards bishop of Galloway, had visited the King at Falkland, in his way from the Provincial Synod of Stirling. In his sermon in the Church of Perth, August 10th, he suited his discourse to the agitated minds of his people, and endeavoured, as a lover of peace, to dissuade them from forming, as yet, any positive opinion concerning the late event. Among other things, he said, in his usual pious and affectionate manner,

" I know it is light that first must satisfy your discontended minds; Father of light, send light *!"

But the disturbed imaginations of the people were at work, and strange noises and appearances were spoken of. Calderwood relates, " Upon the Sabbath day, August tenth, which was the Sabbath immediately after the murder, there was seen in the lodging where the fact had been committed, men opening and closing the windows, with great flashings; men coming to the windows, looking over, and wringing their hands. And the day following, such moanings were heard, that the people about were terrified. Whereupon Mr. (John) Davidson, in his memorials, hath this observation."

In my copy of this part of Calderwood's History, a Latin sentence follows, which had been used by Mr. Davidson; but it is written so badly by the illiterate transcriber, as not to be wholly intelligible. Its meaning seems to be, that the house in which the Emperor Caligula had perpetrated a murder, was always after, through the night, haunted with terrible spectres, till it was ordered to be consumed by fire. And then it is added, " That Caligula

* Cowper's MS. Sermons.

slew his brother Geta, and would have made the senate believe that Geta would have slain him. He therefore desired Papirmannus the lawyer to make an apology for him; but the lawyer answered, "It is easier to commit an atrocious action, than afterwards to excuse it." For which bold reply, the Emperor commanded him to be put to death.

If Davidson's Memorials, either in print or MS. be now any where extent, as he was a man active in the affairs, both of Church and State, much curious information might be derived from them.

Of the same nature with the above, is Calderwood's own account of the King's passage over the Frith of Forth to Leith. Many were of opinion, that the sea would not be permitted to bear favourably, a man who had recently put to death two such excellent young persons as the Earl of Gowrie and his brother. Calderwood says, "Upon Monday the 11th of August, the King boated at Cluness, east from Burntisland, about twelve hours noon, but landed not at Leith till betwixt four and five. It was remarked, that there was ebbing and flowing three times at that tide; that the water betwixt Leith and Burntisland was black; that the ships in Leith haven were troubled with the swel-

ling of the water; and that a great noise of cannon and harquebusses was heard, as if he had been new born."

Such preternatural occurrences, would be easily credited at that period, and the reports of them must have increased the general abhorrence of the late tragical event. But they were not more extraordinary than what the King and his courtiers afterwards endeavoured to make the people believe, concerning the necromancy of the Earl of Gowrie. "He was an atheist, an incarnate devil, in the coat of an angel, a studier of magic, a conjurer with devils, some of whom he had under his command," said Mr. Patrick Galloway, in a sermon which he preached at the mercat cross of Edinburgh. Thus was the virtuous Earl of Gowrie calumniated after his death.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTENTS

The King visited at Falkland by Mr. William Cowper, and Mr. John Spottiswood. Mr. Cowper's Report of a Conversation which he had with the Earl of Gowrie considered. Character of Mr. Patrick Galloway. His zeal to serve the King. Suggests that the Earl should be accused of sorcery. His Conferences with Mr. William Rhind. His Dealings with Andrew Henderson. Endeavours are used to discover the Person who was said to be in Arms in the Study. Several Persons named. Henry Younger slain, and the guilt of his having been that armed Man was for some time fixed upon him. Andrew Henderson offers, on certain Conditions, to own that he was the armed Man. The improbability of his being the guilty Person. His Character and Description. Mr. Galloway's Report of him to the People of Edinburgh. The Proceedings against the Ministers of Edinburgh. All of them, one excepted, banished from the Town. Mr. Cowper's Sermon to the People of Edinburgh. Some Remarks upon it. Deposi-

tion of James Wemyss of Bogie, to prove that the Earl was a Necromancer. Andrew Henderson's first Deposition. The Story of the two Silk Garters.

During the few days that the King remained at Falkland, after his return from Perth, he and his courtiers, and his lawyers, were much employed in devising such an account of the late tragical affair as would appear favourable to the King, and in searching for plausible grounds of imputing treason to the late Earl of Gowrie and his brother. His Majesty was visited at Falkland by persons from all quarters. Among them was a considerable number of the clergy, some of them attracted by curiosity, and others by a desire of aiding him in vindicating his character, which they foresaw was likely to suffer.

There were good men who wished to preserve the peace of the country, and therefore felt themselves disposed to throw blame on the late Earl and his brother, rather than on the King, afraid that the subjects in the realm, to their own hurt, might have their hearts alienated from their lawful sovereign. One of these was the before mentioned Mr. William Cowper, one of the ministers of Perth. He

had been attending the Synod at Stirling, on the day when the King was at Perth. In his return, he went out of his way to Falkland, that he might hear from the King, and from those who were with him, the particulars of the tragical affair in which they had been engaged. He there met with Mr. John Spottiswood, then minister of Calder, and afterwards Archbishop of St. Andrew's. Mr. Cowper was a pious man, and a good writer, but of an easy natural temper, and apt to admire those who appeared to him his superiors, either in literature, or in what are called the gifts of fortune. Both of these ministers bore a personal attachment to the King. Mr. Cowper was yet a zealous Presbyterian, but Mr. Spottiswood was ambitious, and had begun to solicit court favours. He was afterwards greatly instrumental in making Mr. Cowper so far to alter his principles, as to accept of the bishopric of Galloway.

Spottiswood, in the history which he wrote after he was an archbishop*, takes the side of the King against the Earl of Gowrie, but expresses himself with a considerable degree of modera-

* Spottiswood's History, page 460.

tion. He, however, says, "I remember myself, that meeting with Mr. William Cowper, then minister of Perth, the third day after in Falkland, he shewed me, that not many days before that accident, visiting by occasion the Earl in his own house, he found him reading a book, entitled, 'De Conspirationibus adversus Principes,' (concerning conspiracies against princes,) and having asked him what book it was, he answered, that it was a Collection of the Conspiracies against Princes, which he said were all of them foolishly contrived, and faulty either in one point or other; for he that goeth about such a business should not, said he, put any man on his counsel. And Mr. Cowper, not liking such discourses, desired him to lay away such books, and to read others of a better subject. I verily think that he was then studying how to go beyond all conspirators recorded in any history."

I remark that the Earl of Gowrie, who had been for several weeks at the deer hunting in the Highlands, returned to Perth, it is most probable, only on the Saturday before his death, which was August 2d. Mr. Cowper went to the Synod at Stirling on the Monday, August 4th, and surely

he would not find the Earl reading such a book on the intervening Sabbath.

I make no doubt that the archbishop wrote according as his memory served him at the time. But it is to the last degree improbable, that the Earl, if he had then any treasonable design in view, would have spoken in the manner which he did to Mr. Cowper. At whatever time it was, when he had the conversation, he seems to have expressed his opinion freely as on a general subject in history, and his having done so, should rather be considered as an argument, that he was harbouring in his mind no design which needed to be concealed. If it had been thought of importance to serve the cause of the King, Mr. Cowper would have been brought forward to give an account of the conversation, but no public notice was taken of it.

Lord Hailes, in his pamphlet on the Gowrie Conspiracy*, conjectures that the book which the Earl was reading, was the Latin translation of Machiavel's Discourses on the sixth chapter of the third book of Livy; and that, because of the explanation which Machiavel gave of his intentions

* Page 56.

in writing these discourses, the Earl of Gowrie might innocently have read them.

But the clergyman who was most active in the present exigency, was the King's chaplain, Mr. Patrick Galloway. This extraordinary man, who sometimes was denominated "The man of many pensions," had once been the minister of Perth. During his ministry there he had been much attached to the Gowrie family, and professed the patriotic principles of the first Earl of that title. But upon his receiving preferment at court, he altered his conduct, and, beyond many others, was an abettor of the King's arbitrary proceedings. He possessed considerable property in Perth, and had great influence in the management of the affairs of that town. Any piece of business in which he engaged, he prosecuted with all his might, and his dexterity and unwearied diligence rendered him in most instances eminently successful.

He well understood the weakness of mind which was then common among the people, with regard to witchcraft and enchantments, and how much the persons who were supposed to practise them were reprobated and detested by the ministers of the Gospel and other good men. Papers, with

characters written upon them which none of the courtiers could understand, were said to have been found in the pocket of the Earl of Gowrie after his death, and a strange effect had been ascribed to these papers. Mr. Galloway therefore judged, that the most effectual method of serving the King in the present case, would be to propagate an opinion, that the late Earl had been a studier of magic, and had trusted to spells and amulets. To succeed in that matter, he gained the confidence of the Earl's travelling tutor, Mr. William Rhind. In conversations which they had together, Mr. Rhind confessed that when at Padua, the Earl was in use to carry in his pocket, the papers which had been found. That he, Mr. Rhind, disliked these papers, and sometimes sought to destroy them. But though he had been constantly with the Earl till the time of his death, he had not suspected him to be addicted to sorcery. Mr. Galloway reported Mr. Rhind's confession, and the poor gentleman was examined by torture.

Mr. Patrick Galloway has been accused of persuading Andrew Henderson, the Earl's factor, by the sophistical reasoning of state casuistry, to give a false deposition. But it would be, I think, very

uncharitable to suppose, that his ardency of temper, and his opinion of the lawfulness and expediency of what is necessary for effecting the purposes of state policy, would lead him so far as to urge any human creature to be guilty of the crime of perjury. He certainly, notwithstanding all the faults attributed to him by some ecclesiastical writers, was a man far from being destitute of scriptural knowledge, and of a religious principle. It is rather to be supposed that Henderson was induced to offer himself as a witness, by his hope of obtaining a reward, and by his fear lest, if he did not, he should be examined by torture, as having been a confidential servant of the late Earl, and perhaps condemned to lose his life.

The King, however, was abundantly grateful to Mr. Galloway for his services. His pension from the Abbey of Scoon, was immediately doubled. He was appointed one of the ministers of Edinburgh, when the King went to England. His son, after having in the early part of his life, enjoyed several lucrative posts from government, was raised to the dignity of the peerage, by the title of Lord Dunkeld.

We are indeed informed, by Mr. Calderwood, that in June 1601, the King's minister, Mr. Patrick Galloway, was dismissed from the court at the instance of King James's queen, who seems to have born resentment against him, because of the part he had acted in the defamation of her avowed favourites the late Earl of Gowrie and his brother. But his banishment from the court did not long continue.

While the King was still remaining at Falkland, endeavours were used to find a man acknowledged to be the armed person, who the King affirmed had been with him and Mr. Alexander Ruthven in the Earl's study and gallery chamber. If no such person could be found, the story told by the King of what passed betwixt him and Mr. Ruthven, must then have rested merely on his own affirmation, which, in the present state of the public mind, would have been little regarded. If any of his Majesty's servants had been admitted there, by the connivance of the Earl's porter, it was not for the King's credit that such a circumstance should now be brought to light; but it would tend to his vindication in the public opinion, if some person

should own himself to have been put into the closet by the Earl's own order.

If Sir John Ramsay had not said in his deposition, that when he entered the gallery chamber, he saw a man standing at the back of the King, though he could give no description of him, as he soon disappeared, I should have been apt to imagine that no third person had been there at all. No armed man was seen by the people in the court yard, running from the narrow turnpike; for if they had observed such a person, they would afterwards have spoken of it, and, by some means, it might have been discovered who and what he was. Indeed there appears to have been no necessity, except what might arise from the fears of the King, for any armed man to have been in the study, considering the humble temper of mind which Mr. Ruthven had that day seemingly felt and expressed. I should therefore have imagined, that the King and Mr. Ruthven, who were only a short time together in the private chamber, were in amicable conference, till the King saw it was the proper season, to alarm his nobles, and fully to execute the plan, which, I conceive, had been previously concerted.

According to Calderwood, who was attentive to all that was passing at that period, a royal proclamation was immediately issued, in which the man in armour was described as being "A black grim man," and Mr. Robert Oliphant, a domestic of the late Earl, was named. But Oliphant refused the imputation, and it was notoriously known that he was not in Perth on the day specified. A man of the name of Lesly, and another of the name of Gray were next mentioned, but they also rejected the charge, and were able to prove their alibi.

At last, it was determined that the guilt should be fixed on Henry Younger, a servitor of the late Earl. But he was in Dundee on the day when the catastrophe happened at Perth. Being still there, he was informed of the charge brought against him. He immediately left Dundee to go to Falkland to declare his innocence before the King. But a commission was given to Baron Lindsay, who went with an armed party to intercept him, having private orders to put him to death, if no promises of pardon and reward could induce him to substitute himself as the guilty person. The poor man, perceiving the party, fled, and sought to conceal himself in a corn field. He

was pursued, and as he was protesting that he was innocent of the guilt charged upon him, he was slain by Colonel Henry Bruce, one of the party.

His dead body was brought to Falkland, and there exposed at the market-cross, where the King was present. Mr. Patrick Galloway, who was still in attendance upon the King, addressing his Majesty, said, "Now, Sir, the man who should have helped to have done the deed, could not be taken alive, but now his dead body lies before you."

It should be observed, that Mr. Galloway was not speaking the truth, when he said, that the poor man could not be taken alive, for he could easily have been overpowered and taken prisoner, and brought to trial at Falkland. But the infliction of immediate death on all obnoxious and refractory persons, seems to have been the line of conduct chosen, in the whole of that tragical affair, which related to John Earl of Gowrie, and his brother. Thus was the life of a poor unfortunate serving man, and who was a fellow-creature, sacrificed to what some unprincipled statesmen judged to be expedient in the present case. But what they had now done was of no use to their cause. It increased the prejudice against the King, for the

certainty of Henry Younger having been in Dundee on the 5th of August, was soon known, and eagerly published.

In the strait in which the King, and his confidential servants now were, they were unexpectedly relieved by an offer made to them by Andrew Henderson, who had been factor to the late Earl of Gowrie, which was, that if a promise of pardon was given him, he would own himself to have been the armed person, who was present with the King and Mr. Ruthven in the Earl's study. Calderwood says, "It was constantly reported that it was Mr. Patrick Galloway, who moved Henderson to take upon him that he was the armed man who should have assisted Mr. Alexander Ruthven; and that he and Mr. Galloway had long been familiar, Henderson being the factor who paid him his yearly pension out of the Abbay Lands of Scoon." But I cannot allow myself to suppose that Mr. Galloway was so very deeply concerned in persuading Henderson to make such a proposal, far less that he instructed him in what he should say in his depositions.

But surely when Henderson's offer was accepted, it was forgotten, or shamefully disregarded what the King himself had before declared; for Mr. Cal-

derwood tells us, that the King, the next day after he had returned from Perth to Falkland, being at the hunting, was in conversation with the honest gentleman "the goodman of Pitmenie," who suggested, that the armed man in the study might possibly have been Andrew Henderson the factor. "No," replied his Majesty, "he was not the person; for I know that Smack (that fellow) well enough." Henderson, according to his own deposition, had not his helmet when he was in the study, but had sent it to his own house: If his face therefore was not then covered, the King easily could have known him.

The King also, in his proclamation, had said, that the unknown armed man, was "a black grim man." But this description could not belong to Henderson, for Calderwood, who it is probable often had seen him, says, "He was a man of low stature, of a ruddy complexion, and brown bearded." Archbishop Spottiswood's character of him is, "It was much marvelled that, in so high an attempt, the Earl should have made choice of such a person. But Henderson was a man of a servile spirit, and apt enough to do mischief*."

* Spottiswood's Hist. page 459.

The news of the discovery of the armed man was industriously spread. Mr. Patrick Galloway made intimation of it to the people of Edinburgh, in his Sermon at the Mercat Cross, Monday, August 11th. "The man," said he, "who should have done the deed, has not been slain, but is yet living; a man well enough known to this town, Andrew Henderson, Chamberlain to my Lord Gowrie. This day I received a letter from him, subscribed with his own hand. Any man who would wish to see it, may come to me, if they know his hand writ, for their satisfaction. The tenor of the letter is." The detail given by Mr. Galloway of the substance of the letter, contains, with some variations, what Henderson afterwards said in his depositions. The King was present, and heard Mr. Galloway give an account of the whole affair, in some respects very different from the narration which the King afterwards published of the whole affair.

I am still taking my information from Calderwood's MS. History. The King, and Galloway his chaplain, went to Glasgow some days after, and there at the Mercat Cross, Mr. Galloway preached in the King's presence, in the same man-

ner he had done at Edinburgh. Speaking of Henderson, he said, " He was the instrument of saving the King's life, when he was with Mr. Ruthven in the study, and now, by his testimony, he is the instrument of vindicating the King's honour. I must say, in my conscience, this man is rather worthy of reward than of punishment."

Mr. Galloway's harangues, however, were so violent in abusing the memory of the late Earl, and savoured so much of court flattery, that they made no great impression on the minds of the people in the King's favour. The clergy of Edinburgh were openly incredulous, and were subjected to a degree of persecution. Mr. Galloway, it is said, did not love them, and instigated the King in his proceedings against them.

Wednesday, August 6, 1600, the magistrates of Edinburgh intimated to the ministers there, the King's order sent from Falkland, enjoining them immediately to render public thanks to God for the King's deliverance from the danger he had been in at Perth on the preceding day. No mention was made in the King's letter of the particulars of the alleged treason, and there were already reports in the town not favourable to the King's

conduct. The ministers therefore hesitated, till they should be instructed in the truth of that matter for which they were called to give thanks. They were thankful that the King was safe, but they could not intimate in their solemn thanksgivings, and in their speeches to the people, their belief of his being free from blame; and indeed they strongly suspected that he had been exceedingly guilty.

The ministers were instantly sent for to attend a meeting of the Privy Council. The magistrates accompanied them. While they were there, and arguing on the affair in hand, they were joined by the good Mr. David Lindsay, minister of Leith, who had arrived that morning from Falkland, and believed the story as he had heard it related by the King himself. As he appeared to have no doubts, it was agreed that he should be the man employed to return the public thanks. He went to the Mercat Cross, along with the magistrates, and some of the Lords of Council, where he returned thanks to God for the King's safety, and related the story to the people as he had heard from his Majesty's own mouth.

But the King himself came to Edinburgh, Monday, August 11th. The next day, the ministers were called before him and his council. On their being required to render public thanks, as the King had proposed, Mr. Peter Hewat, minister of the Upper Tolbooth Church, acquiesced, and met with no farther trouble. But the rest of them, viz. Mr. William Watson, Mr. John Hall, Mr. Walter Balcamquell, Mr. Robert Bruce, and Mr. James Balfour, demurred, as they wished for further light before they could with a safe conscience declare to the people that the late Earl of Gowrie and his brother had been traitors. The refractory ministers were commanded by the King and his Council, not to preach in any of his Majesty's dominions under the pain of death; and were charged to leave Edinburgh within forty-eight hours, and not to come within ten miles of it, under the pain of death. They accordingly left Edinburgh, August 14th, and the town thereby was destitute of all its ministers, except Mr. Peter Hewat.

It was during their absence that Mr. William Cowper was sent for from Perth, to give a day's preaching to the people of Edinburgh. The sermon he preached consisted of two parts, one part

of it being delivered in the forenoon, and the other in the afternoon. I have a copy of it in MS., seemingly written with his own hand. The subject was the conversion of Zaccheus the publican. In the afternoon, when speaking of the necessity of divine grace to change the hearts of sinners, he took occasion to say, "Especially let us seek it" (the Divine grace) "at this time, that now we may not abide in the hardness of our heart, when the Lord, both by his word and works, is so fast calling us to repentance; and I think, amongst all the works of God, that serve to humble us, this last miserable event is one of the first.

"I know there are many among you, that think of it, as I did myself when I first heard of it. I thought indeed he (Gowrie) had suffered as an innocent; and what grief it then wrought in me, my own conscience beareth record. The loss of no earthly creature went never so near my heart; and the first thing that ever chilled my affection toward him, was an appearance that he had gone without the compass of godliness, which made me then" (viz. the Sunday after Gowrie's death,) "to say, thir (these) words to my people, I know, said I, it is light that first must satisfy your discontented

minds; and, therefore, the Father of Light, send light!

"But I am sorrowful from my heart, that the light that is, makes against him whom we loved, —and if the light break out as it has begun, we will find ourselves disappointed of our hope. That which I spake then unto them," (viz. the people of Perth,) "I speak presently unto you" (viz. the people of Edinburgh,) "the light that hitherto God hath discovered in that matter, inclines me to the clearing of his Majesty's innocence, and lays a blame on the other.

"And if ye crave my reason, I say, it is the testimony of his servant, (Andrew Henderson,) that is presently in prison, which, in my judgment, is meikle to be regarded; for I have known him these four or five years bygone, and can give no other witness, but that which both town and country will give unto him, that is, the testimony of a man that feareth God, and dealt uprightly with all men.

"And whereas some of you think that he is a suppositious man, and that his deposition is rather a policy than any verity, that is more incredible to me than any other thing of this action is to you;

and if my testimony can have any credit with you, I will bear to you record, that it is verified unto me by honest men of our town, that he was seen coming down the stair, from that chamber where the King was, before any of the King's servants, except only John Ramsay, or before my lord entered in. And what his (Henderson's) deposition is, I will tell you shortly."

Henderson before this time had given his first deposition at Falkland, August 20. The substance of it, as it was detailed by Mr. Cowper, is not inserted in the M.S. But Mr. Cowper having finished what he had to say concerning the alleged conspiracy, offered the following advices to the people, which, it must be owned, were then seasonable, and proper to come from a good man, who had conceived an opinion of the truth of the conspiracy, and was anxious that the peace of the country should be preserved. "Now," said he, "I leave this, there are three things I will touch shortly: the one is concerning the brethren of the ministry; this doing of mine may seem to condemn them in a fault, but I hope no wise man will think so, when he considereth that one preacher

may speak that with a warrant, which another may not."

"The next thing concerns his Majesty: We are to crave God, that this warning may work amendment in him, and a care to purge the country of the great contempt of the Gospel, and of the innocent blood wherewith it is defiled; for I saw never yet thir (these) great temporal deliverances from danger, where they wrought not a turning of the heart to God, but they were always the forerunners of a greater temporal judgment.

"And the last thing concerns you that are his people: I exhort you, in the name of God, to think reverently of your Prince; remembering that Solomon binds your consciences not to speak ill of him, even in your secret chambers."

I observe, upon what Mr. Cowper said, of "its being verified to him by honest men, that Henderson was seen coming down the stair," if some of these honest men, or of the persons whom they meant, had been brought forward and sworn, it would have greatly served the King, and put an end to all the doubts which were very generally entertained. But they were not called.

Mr. Cowper was now differing in his opinion from the brethren with whom he had often acted in concert. He was of a tender spirit, and sometimes subject to what might be termed a morbid melancholy. He seemed to be now painfully apprehensive of the censure which he was now likely to incur; for at the end of his MS. are subjoined, in a detached form, Two Texts of Scripture, the first, 1 Corin. 12. "There are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit. To one is given by the spirit, the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge. By the same spirit, he distributes to every one severally as he will." (old translation.) The second is, Rom. 10. "Why doest thou judge thy brother? or why despisest thou thy brother?" (old translation.)

Mr. Cowper's expression of "there having been an appearance of the Earl's having gone without (beyond) the compass of Godliness," must have referred to the crime which the Earl's enemies were now endeavouring to fix upon him, viz. the crime of sorcery. On the 9th of August, James Wemyss of Bogie had been examined at Falkland, with a view of establishing that point. In his deposition, concerning the conversation which he had

with the Earl when in the Highlands, it appears that the Earl, as a man who had travelled, and been fully educated in the literature of the times, was able to report the groundless pretensions of the Cabbalists in their use of certain words, and of those other persons who boasted of their knowledge of the secrets of nature. But he evidently spoke merely to show his learning, and in a jocular strain. Indeed, at that period, and a long time after, any who excelled in chemical preparations, and in the experiments of natural philosophy, which I doubt not was the case with the Earl of Gowrie, might have been almost certain of being suspected of necromancy or conjuration. But, unlike to an evil-minded magician, the Earl was open and artless in his speeches and behaviour, not aware of the subtilty of his enemies, or of what they might insinuate against him.

August 20, 1600, Andrew Henderson's first deposition was emitted at Falkland, in presence of John, Earl of Montrose, Chancellor; Alexander, Lord Elphinston, Treasurer; Sir Thomas Hamilton, King's Advocate; Sir David Murray, Comptroller; Sir George Hume of Spot, and Sir James Melvill, Knights.

Henderson then deposed, that the late Earl of Gowrie put him into the private chamber, to which afterwards came the King, and Mr. Alexander Ruthven, and that the Earl ordered him to do as Mr. Alexander should direct him. That Mr. Alexander took from him his dagger to stab the King, but that he (Henderson) threw the dagger from his hand, and thereby saved the life of the King. That afterwards Mr. Alexander brought into the room a garter, with which he attempted to bind his Majesty's hands, before he should put him to death, but that he (Henderson) wrested the garter from him, and thereby he, a second time, saved his Majesty's life.

But to shew how inconsistent with, and contradictory to each other, the accounts were of the King's danger, I shall quote from Mr. Galloway's sermon, which he delivered in the King's presence, at the market-cross of Edinburgh, April 11th, the following words, in which the King then seemed to acquiesce. " Mr. Alexander came up again, bringing a pair of silk garters in his hand, and after he had locked the door, he said, (to the King) traitor, thou must die, and therefore lay thy hands together, that I may bind thee." Mr. Galloway

adds, " the intent, no doubt, was, that the King being bound, should be strangled, and then cast into a cave or pit prepared for him."

The story of the belt or garter, which was found by John Graham of Balgowne, among the " bent" or rushes at the door of the gallery chamber, I have explained in Chapter IV. Sir Thomas Erskine took immediate possession of it, as he had before done of the mysterious papers found in the Earl of Gowrie's pocket, but neither it nor the papers were produced and examined at the trial before the Parliament. They were perhaps among the secret articles which Sir Thomas Erskine was afterwards induced to discover to King James' Queen, to the great displeasure of her husband.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTENTS.

Three of Gowrie's servants tried and executed. Their behaviour. The conjecture of Gowrie's having concealed his design from his brother examined. Treatment of the Ministers of Edinburgh. Wemyss of Bogie, Mr. William Rhind, and Andrew Henderson, examined at Falkland. The dead bodies of Gowrie and his brother sent from Perth to Edinburgh. The two youngest brothers of the Earl, and four of his friends, summoned. The Parliament meets. The Lords of Articles examined witnesses, and reported to Parliament. Remarks on the written depositions. The sentences pronounced. The dead bodies of Gowrie and his brother hanged and quartered. The King's remarks. The fifth of August to be an anniversary day of public thanksgiving. The anniversary afterwards introduced into the English church. Remarks concerning it. Of the King's character. Rewards conferred on the King's servants.

In the family feuds and civil commotions which we read of in the histories of former times, it ap-

pears that the chiefs frequently were either pardoned, or found means to make peace for themselves, and to evade punishment when vengeance had fallen on their dependents. The meaner vassals, the servants, and humble cottagers, were often wantonly sacrificed to serve the interests of their superiors, as if life had not been equally dear to the poor as it is to persons in a higher condition. No just regret seems to have been expressed on their account, though perhaps they had been forced to take a part, very unwillingly, in the cause of their chiefs, or were influenced to do so by gratitude and generous affection, or by a sense of what they reckoned to be their bounden duty. Great men, especially they who are rulers of nations, will, however, be responsible at the bar of general judgment for the destruction of lives, and the other misfortunes which they brought unnecessarily on the inferior classes of the people.

Three of Gowrie's servants were, by an order from the King, examined, perhaps by torture, which was then customary in Scotland, and condemned to suffer death. We have no account of the particulars of their trial. They had indeed been seen with swords in their hands, not, however, with a

hostile intention against the King, but to protect both the King and their master from the sudden attempt of some unknown enemies.

It is said in Fleming and Mercer's MS. Chronicle in my possession, that "they were hanged at the mercat-cross of Perth, for art and part of the conspiracy." Calderwood relates as follows: "Upon Saturday, August 23, 1600, Mr. Thomas Cranston, George Craigengelt, and (Donald Mac-Duff,) baron officer of Strabraan, attenders upon the Earl of Gowrie, were hanged in St. Johnston (Perth) for drawing swords in time of the tumult. Yet confessed they nothing that could smell of knowledge of any conspiracy. Mr. Thomas Cranston, brother to Sir John Cranston of that ilk, exhorted the people to forbear imprecations against themselves, for he had found by experience that they wanted not their own effect; for he himself had used three kinds of imprecations, to wit, God nor a sword go through me! I shall be taken for a traitor! God nor I be hanged! I have been taken, said he, for a traitor, but I thank God I am not one. I was stabbed through with a sword at this last tumult, and now I am to be hanged. He conceived a fervent prayer, at which time, in the

midst of a cloudy darkness, gleamed a sudden brightness, to the astonishment of the beholders."

The testimony of Archbishop Spottiswood is not to be disregarded. After having mentioned the slaughter of Henry Younger, one of Gowrie's servants, of which I have given an account in Chapter VI. and having said that for some days after his death he was reputed to have been the armed man in the study, he adds, concerning the persons executed at Perth, "At their dying, they declared they knew nothing of the Earl's purpose, and had only followed him, as their master, to that room, where, if they had known the King to have been, they would have stood for him against their master and all others *.

It was not thought expedient to prosecute to the death any more persons. It was evident to the whole nation that, if the Earl and his brother had any traitorous design against the King, they had kept it private betwixt themselves, and not communicated it to any human being. The Archbishop, indeed, mentions an opinion, which some

* Spottiswood's History, page 459.

entertained, that the design was solely in the Earl's own mind, for that even his own brother had no knowledge of it. "Many," says he, "have conjectured, that if the treason had taken effect, it was in the Earl's purpose to have made away both with his brother and him, (viz. Henderson,) so that he might not be supposed to have any knowledge thereof*."

But, if the conjecture of the persons mentioned by the archbishop had been just, John Earl of Gowrie must have been a monster of iniquity, if, in order to save himself from suspicion, he had involved his innocent brother in an affair which, with certainty, would issue in his destruction. The conjecture ill corresponds with the eagerness which the Earl shewed to enter with his two swords into the chamber where he thought his brother and the King were in imminent danger, from some treacherous persons belonging to the court; or from a certain Highlandman, mentioned by Henderson in his Depositions, whom the Earl had, on that day, intended to seize and commit to prison, and who, he might suspect, had, with some associates, for a

* Spottiswood's History, page 460.

bloody and traitorous purpose, entered his house unperceived.

The ministers of Edinburgh, however, continued to be treated with severity. We learn from Mr. Calderwood, that, upon Thursday, September 5, 1600, the King's proclamation was read at the cross of Edinburgh, summoning the refractory ministers to appear before the King and his privy council at Stirling, viz. Mr. William Watson, on Tuesday the ninth of that month; Mr. John Hall, and Mr. Walter Balcamquell, upon the tenth; and Mr. Robert Bruce, and Mr. James Balfour, upon Thursday the eleventh.

These ministers appeared on the days appointed. Mr. John Hall satisfied the King, and in the after part of his life, assisted the King in most of his measures with regard to the Church. Mr. Walter Ballcamquell, who had long been in the ministry of Edinburgh, was favourably dealt with. Mr. William Watson, and Mr. James Balfour, were declared to be transportable from Edinburgh. But Mr. Robert Bruce argued with the King and council, and persisted in declaring his disbelief of the treason of the Earl of Gowrie.

His brethren of the ministry, who satisfied the King, were generally thought not to have been really convinced of the truth of the alleged conspiracy, but to have availed themselves of some ambiguous expressions suggested by Mr. Patrick Galloway, which he prevailed with them to use, and with the King to accept. But Mr. Galloway was an enemy to Mr. Bruce, and Mr. Bruce was so much dissatisfied with his political conduct, that he refused to solicit his court influence in his favour, or to have any correspondence with him.

It may be proper to notice, that Mr. Bruce was at this time, perhaps, the most popular minister in the kingdom. He was singularly pious, and of great tenderness of conscience, and his uprightness was so well known, that many people were now disposed to pay an implicit regard to his opinion. He was also respected as the descendant of an ancient and honourable family, being the second son of the baron of Airth in the shire of Stirling. The paternal portion assigned him, was the estate and barony of Kinnaird, in the same county; and though he had been educated for following the practice of the law, he soon preferred the study of Divinity,

and became, in the year 1587, one of the ministers of Edinburgh.

According to Calderwood, he was a very loyal man to the King, and well affected to his service in all lawful matters. The King, when reasoning with him at Stirling, said, "I see, Mr. Robert, you would make me a murderer." He replied, "I will not make you a murderer. Yea, Sir, though I knew it were so, I will neither withdraw my affection or obedience from your service, but rather press to draw you to repentance, in respect you are not subject to our function." He could not consent to relate from the pulpit to the people a story as true, which in his own mind he suspected was false. The sentence pronounced upon him was, that he should be warded or confined in the family house at Airth, till the eighth of October, and then should leave the kingdom.

The time of his departure from the kingdom was, however, protracted, in consequence of the endeavours of his friends to procure for him a pardon. But their solicitations were ineffectual. He sailed from the Queensferry, November 3d, 1600, and November 8th, arrived at Dieppe in France, the country which was then an assylum for perse-

cuted Presbyterian ministers. I add, that in May 1601, he came from France to England, and sometime thereafter was allowed to return to his native country. But as he never would affirm that the Earl of Gowrie and his brother were traitors, he never recovered the favour of the court, nor his former church at Edinburgh. He lived, suffering under various forms of persecution, but still very useful as a minister of the gospel, till his death, which did not happen till the year 1631.

Immediately after the death of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother, preparations began to be made for the confiscation of the Gowrie estates, which was supposed to have been the object which the King and his confidential servants had always had ultimately in their view. The form of a trial of the deceased brothers for treason was necessary; witnesses were to be summoned and examined: and the Parliament, on receiving a report of the evidence taken, was to pronounce the judgment of forfeiture.

At Falkland, August 9, 1600, which was a few days after the late tragical event, James Wemyss of Bogie was examined, in presence of the Lord Chancellor, the King's Advocate, and some other

members of privy council, on the regard which the Earl paid to magical spells and enchantments.

At Falkland, August 20, 1600, in presence of John, Earl of Montrose, Lord Chancellor; Alexander, Master of Elphingston, who was then Lord Treasurer; Sir Thomas Hamilton, his Majesty's Advocate; Sir George Home of Spott; Sir Robert Melvill, and Sir James Melvill, knights, Mr. William Rhind, the late Earl's travelling governor, was examined, chiefly, as Wemyss of Bogie had been, with regard to the Earl's attachment to the use of magical arts; and was re-examined August 22d. I have mentioned the names and designations of the examiners, because they cruelly employed the torturing engine of the boots, in their endeavour to make Mr. Rhind confess that the Earl had been criminal.

They also, on the 20th of August, examined, but without using torture, Andrew Henderson, the late Earl's factor, on what he said had passed between the King and Mr. Alexander Ruthven in the gallery chamber. These depositions, which were taken at Falkland, were afterwards reported to the Parliament at Edinburgh.

October 30, 1600, the dead bodies of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother, which had been committed to the care of the magistrates of Perth, were sent from Perth to Edinburgh. They were to be brought into court at the time of their trial, which seems to have been the practice in cases of treason, that the horror of mind natural on such occasions might be increased, and that the parties accused might, in some degree, be said to be present while their trial was going on. All the witnesses who were to be examined in the time of the Parliament had before been cited at their own houses, and at the mercat crosses, on the 28th and 29th days of August.

Besides the witnesses, were cited "William Ruthven, brother and apparent heir to John, Earl of Gowrie, and to his brother Mr. Alexander Ruthven, and the tutors and curators, if he had any, and all others having pretence or interest in the matter, to come and hear it found and declared, that the said Earl of Gowrie and his brother Mr. Alexander, had committed treason, in attempting to bereave his Majesty of his life at St. Johnston, (Perth,) on the 5th of August last by past *."

* Cromarty, page 33.

But the foresaid William Ruthven, and his younger brother Patrick, afraid of evil intentions against them, had before fled into England.

Alexander and Henry Ruthvens, sons to Alexander Ruthven of Frieland; Hugh Moncrief, brother to William Moncrief of that ilk; and Patrick Eviot, brother to Colin Eviot of Balhousie, were summoned for having been concerned as active persons in the foresaid treason. But they had fled, and did not appear. I notice, that Alexander Ruthven, baron of Frieland, grand uncle of the late John, Earl of Gowrie, and father of the above mentioned Alexander and Henry, had died immediately before, or in the time of the meeting of Parliament, for, in the sentence pronounced, November 15th, against his two sons, he is denominated "Umquhile," (that is, the late) Alexander Ruthven of Frieland."

The Parliament met at Edinburgh, November 1, 1600. They adjourned to the 4th day of that month, on which day the Lord Advocate reported his diligence in summoning the foresaid parties and witnesses. Andrew Henderson, the late Earl of Gowrie's factor, appeared, and produced a written order from the King, enjoining that he should

not be prosecuted for any part which he bore in the late treasonable attempt against the King. The Parliament, on the same day, empowered "the Lords of Articles," as their committee, to examine all the witnesses, and afterwards to make a report.

The Lords of Articles, who were a set of men peculiar to the Scottish Parliament, were sometimes nominated by the King, and never without his special influence. It was commonly by them only that all important matters of business were brought into Parliament, which procured to the King, in a great measure, the management of the Parliamentary proceedings. At this time they consisted of four Earls, four Lords, two Bishops, four Abbots, seven Barons, and nine Commissioners from boroughs. They were thereby thirty-four in number; and it is remarkable, that some of those who were now to act as judges in the trial before them, were also to be examined as witnesses. The number of witnesses to be examined was thirty-one.

The Lords of articles having assembled, in a few days completed their business, and made their report. Notwithstanding their inclination to favour the King, the depositions taken by them, ex-

cepting that of Andrew Henderson, seem rather to justify than to condemn the Earl and his brother. I have all along referred to these depositions, as they furnish a narrative of what happened at Perth on the fifth of August; and if an expert lawyer, as an exculpatory pleader in the behalf of the Earl and his brother, had been appointed, or allowed to give his aid in the examinations of the witnesess, I apprehend, that even the deposition of Andrew Henderson would have been declared of no signification, because of the improbabilities it contained, and its contradictions to what he had asserted in the deposition which he had formerly emitted when he was examined at Falkland.

November 15, 1600, the Parliament again met. Calderwood says, "the King and Parliament came on foot to the tolbooth, because of the snow which had fallen, and the great frost." A large hall in the tolbooth seems then to have been the ordinary place of their meeting, and their walk thither from Holyrood-house was nearly a measured mile in length.

According to Lord Cromarty, the Lord Advocate laid this day before the Parliament authenticated copies of the depositions of all the witnesses

who had been examined by him and the Lords of Articles; and also of the depositions of the witnesses he had examined at Falkland, relating to the treason of the Earl and his brother; and also of the depositions taken by him at Perth, relating to the treason of the three persons who were executed there *. The depositions taken at Falkland and Edinburgh are fully inserted by the Earl of Cromarty and Mr. William Panton, in their treatises on the Gowrie conspiracy; but I have not found in any publication a circumstantial account of the trial and dying confessions of the persons who suffered at Perth. Both Archbishop Spottiswood and Mr. Calderwood say, that they made no confession of their having had any evil intention against the King, but that they would have defended him against all danger, to the utmost of their power.

The parliament declared their judgment to be, that the late Earl of Gowrie, and his brother Alexander, were convicted of treason, in having attempted the death of the King. The sentence pronounced was, that their names, memories, and

* Cromarty, page 37.

dignities, should be cancelled and deleted out of the books of the nobility; that their estates and property should be confiscated to the King; that their dead bodies should be carried on Monday next to the public cross of Edinburgh, there to be hanged, quartered, and drawn, in the presence of all the people; and that their heads, quarters, and carcases, should be fixed upon the most patent places in the towns of Edinburgh, Perth, Dundee, and Stirling.

Alexander and Henry Ruthven, sons to the late Alexander Ruthven of Frieland; Hugh Moncrief, brother to William Moncrief of that ilk; and Patrick Eviot, brother to Colin Eviot of Balhousie, were also declared traitors, and their goods were confiscated.

Monday, November 19th, 1600, the dead bodies of the Earl of Gowrie and his brother Alexander were hanged and dismembered at the Cross of Edinburgh, and their escutcheons or coats of arms were publicly torn. Their heads were fixed to the gavel of the tolbooth of Edinburgh, "there to remain till the wind should blow them off;" and their legs and arms were sent to Perth, to be fixed above the ports of that town.

Such was the melancholy end of these two young men, of whom great hopes had been formed. Their fate was deeply lamented by their countrymen. Many of the best men in the kingdom, and especially the people in other countries, believed them to be innocent. But as the King and Parliament, the highest court in the nation, had judged the Earl and his brother to be traitors; and as the Lords of the Privy Council had shewed, in several instances, that they were resolved to prosecute with the utmost rigour all who were of a contrary opinion, the generality of those who were convinced in their own minds that an unjust sentence had been pronounced, thought themselves constrained, for their own safety, to be silent concerning it.

Mr. Calderwood observes, that "the same day (November 19th) on which the carcases of Gowrie and his brother were so ignominiously treated, the Queen, at eleven hours at night, was delivered of a son, who now," says he, "reigns under the name of King Charles." This child was the unfortunate Charles I. who having, though he was a religious man, and of good morals, too much followed the example of his father, in his zeal for prelacy and arbitrary power, was, under a false form of justice,

beheaded by his subjects at London, January 30, 1649.

Mr. Calderwood reports a childish, or rather a superstitious remark, which the King now made, on hearing of his Qeeen's delivery. "I was born," said he, "on the 19th of June. My son Henry was born on the 19th of February. My daughter Elizabeth was born on the 19th of August. I first saw the Queen in Denmark on the 19th of November; and now she is delivered at Dunfermline of my son Charles, upon the 19th of November." His Majesty might have added, on the 19th of November, 1600, was publicly completed my destruction of the Gowrie family, who, if they had continued, would have opposed, and possibly might have defeated, my favourite schemes of innovation in the government, both of church and state.

By an act of Parliament, all persons of the surname of Ruthven were enjoined to choose other surnames before Whitsunday next. But the act was not fully obeyed, for many of them retained their former surname. Only the castle of Ruthven, which was the most ancient seat of the family, had its name changed to that of Hunting Tower.

Another act was made, that, in all time coming, the 5th of August should be religiously observed as a day of thanksgiving for the King's deliverance from the Gowrie treason. After the King went to England, this anniversary was also introduced into the English church, and was kept as one of the holy days while the King lived.

But its introduction into that country was not popular. I find in the Edinburgh MS. the following testimonies of English writers concerning it: Sir Edward Peyton says, "In the appointment of this anniversary, the King mocked the God of heaven *."

J. H. (Harris,) in his History of the Stewarts, says, "The King blasphemed God for his pretended deliverance, all his life after †."

Francis Osborn, Esq. says, "Among a number of other novelties, the King brought a new holyday into the Church of England, wherein God had public thanks given him for his Majesty's deliverance out of Gowrie's hands. Many lyes were told that day, either in the quire of St. Paul's church, or in the long walk. No Scotsman you could meet

* Page 11. † Page 291.

with beyond seas, but laughed at it; and it was said the printed relation of the conspiracy murdered all possibility of credit." * The printed relation mentioned was the King's Narrative of the whole affair, published in September 1600.

I add what I find concerning this anniversary in Arthur Wilson's History of Great Britain, who was a Scotsman, and a respectable writer. His words are, "The fifth of August this year, viz. 1603, had, in England, a new title given to it. Whether the Gowries attempted upon the King's person, or the king on theirs, is variously reported. I will not therefore say that the celebration of this holy day had in it so much prophaneness, for fame may be a lyer; but where there is a strength of policy, there is often a power of worldly wisdom that manages and sways it. The King forgot not the service done him, and the secret contrivances of those who acted for him †." Mr. Wilson then mentions the great rewards which were conferred upon two of the King's servants, who were among those who were most active in that controverted affair.

* Page 335. † Page 12.

The compiler of "the Complete History of England," in three volumes folio, inserted in his collection the whole of Arthur Wilson's History of Great Britain. On the above quoted passage, he makes, in a note, the following remark: "It is no wonder that the author, (Mr. Wilson,) should call in question the truth of this conspiracy, so many years after the time in which it was said to have happened: for King James having immediately thereupon issued out a proclamation for a day of public thanksgiving, several ministers, and some of them his own chaplains, flatly refused to observe it, and chose rather to lose their livings, and to be sent to prison, than to mock God, (to use their own words,) in tendering thanks for what they believed never was *."

The King had indeed reason to be thankful that he had suffered no personal injury in the scuffle which had happened in Perth, for, notwithstanding the precautions he and his friends had taken, some unexpected circumstances might have occurred which would have brought his life into real danger. But, on the supposition that he knew

* History of England, vol. ii. page 667.

well the innocency of Gowrie and his brother, I cannot easily conceive, by what arguments of political casuistry he could possess any inward quiet, or self approbation, when the prayers and praises he had enjoined were offered in the churches. If the truth of the supposition be admitted, it must then be seriously remarked, that it was impious to seek to impose upon the God of heaven, who knoweth all things, and hateth lying, and the height of folly to trifle with his displeasure.

Perhaps the following was the method which the King might employ to satisfy his conscience: Gowrie, and some of his friends and servants, had at last had their recourse to arms, to defend themselves from those who were evidently a hostile party. They had attempted, with drawn swords in their hands, to enter into the gallery chamber, where the nobles attached to the King, and under his direction were, his Majesty being concealed in the adjoining closet. The courts of justice, and the Parliament of the kingdom, had judged that Gowrie and his associates, by their having done so, as the King was in the party they opposed, had committed treason. Three of his servants had been executed for having been thus guilty. Four

of his friends had, on the same account, been pronounced traitors, and had fled from punishment. The King, and those who enjoyed his confidence, holding this in their minds, might flatter themselves into an opinion that they were not mocking God, when they ordered that public thanks should be rendered for the King's providential escape from a dangerous conspiracy.

The heart of man is deceitful. Very slender pretences are often assumed to lay conscience asleep when the mind is strongly bent towards a bad action. It is painful to think, and much more to write, of such characters in history as cannot be approven. It is said, that King James VI. frequently boasted of what he called his "King craft," that is, of his artful dexterity in accomplishing the ends he proposed in his government. But he should have known, that nothing could justify him in doing what was evil in itself, however good he might reckon the consequences would be. And we may add, that he was greatly mistaken, if he imagined that the absolute disposal was given him of the lives and properties of his subjects. He had no Divine right to use them in a subserviency

to his arbitrary will and pleasure, or to sacrifice them to the gratification of his corrupt passions.

Calderwood details the distribution of Gowrie's estates and offices in Perthshire. They were chiefly conferred on gentlemen of the surname of Murray. According to Lord Cromarty, Sir Thomas Erskine, Sir John Ramsay, and Sir Hugh Herries, and some others, who, he says, "did more immediately preserve the King's person, had benefices conferred upon them in Parliament." Crawford, in his book of the Peerage, informs us, that the lands and Lordship of Dirleton, in East Lothian, which had belonged to the Earl of Gowrie, were given to Sir Thomas Erskine. Sir Robert Douglas, and other genealogical writers, mention occasionally rewards and honours bestowed upon them who had shewed themselves to be the King's friends at Perth. I am not sure of their being all accurately stated; and to avoid mistakes, and to prevent perplexity to myself, I think it best not to endeavour to enumerate them.

I have, however, good authority for mentioning the rewards and honours conferred on the town of Perth, where the persons who then bore rule, or

had chief influence, had by their loyalty gratified the King.

November 15, 1600, which was during the sitting of Parliament, the King granted to the town of Perth a prolix charter, confirming all the town's former rights and privileges, with some important additions. And December 30, 1602, he granted "a decreet to the burgh of Perth, against the burgh of Dundee, concerning the liberties and privileges of the water of Tay, and priority of place," which were matters which had often occasioned very serious disputes between these two burghs.

Besides conferring these substantial benefits, he flattered the people of the town, and sought to conciliate their favour, by his becoming one of their fellow burgesses, and appearing at a public banquet which had been prepared for him at the mercat cross. In Fleming and Mercer's M.S. Chronicle in my possession, it is said, "April 15, 1601, the King's Majesty came to Perth, and was made a burgess at the mercat cross. There were eight puncheons of wine set there, and all drunken out. He received the banquet from the town; and subscribed the Guild Book with his own hand, "Jaco-

bus Rex, parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos,' (To spare the humble, and subdue the proud.)

An account to the same purpose is also contained in the M. S. Chronicle which was in the possession of the late Mr. James Cant, as follows: "April 15, 1601, the King's Majesty came to Perth, and that same day he was made Provost, with an great stertine," (leaping, dancing motions,) " of the courtiers. The banquet was made at the cross, and the King was set down there. Six dozen glasses were broken, with many silver pieces and pewter vessells. The King made a great solemn oath, to defend the haill liberties of this burgh."

Thus anxious was the King to engage the people of Perth to be silent with regard to the concern which he had in the late tragical affair.

Even Mr. William Cowper was not neglected, who had spoken so well in his behalf from the Perth and Edinburgh pulpits. Mr. Cowper was yet a Presbyterian in his principles, but felt a bias toward the great men at court. As a friend of the King, he visited, and was introduced at the King's Court in England, in the year 1604. After his re-

turn home, he was, in the year 1605, at the King's recommendation, raised to the parsonage and emoluments of the Church and parish of Perth, though his colleague minister, Mr. John Malcolm, was an older man, and had been settled as a minister in Perth four years before him. Mr. Cowper was converted from Presbyterianism, chiefly by Archbishop Spottiswood, and then, in 1612, he was made Dean of the Chapel royal in Edinburgh, and Bishop of Galloway.

His writings did him honour as a pious and learned man, but his dedications of his pieces, though he wrote them in a pious strain, shew how much he was apt to judge very favourably of persons who were in eminent stations.

It is painful to notice the weaknesses of a man who was so pious and excellent a writer.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTENTS.

The Earl and his Brother not actuated by a desire to revenge upon the King the Death of their Father. The Earl was not inordinately ambitious. He did not trust to the efficacy of Charms and Amulets. These points examined. Of the Gowrie Coat of Arms. Of William the first Lord Ruthven. John, Earl of Gowrie, accused of Necromancy by Mr. Patrick Galloway. Of the bag of papers. Nicolson. King's Narrative. King James' Book on "Demonology." Lord Hailes. Sanderson. Spottiswood. Lord Cromarty. "Tetragrammaton" explained. Weymss' Deposition. Jewish "Cabbala." William Panton's Character of Wemyss of Bogie. Mr. William Rhind examined by torture. His Account of the Papers. What the Characters on the Papers most probably were. "Ruvenorum Conjuratio" Lord Hailes. Lord Cromarty. Astronomers and Astrologers. "Demonology." Good men accused of Necromancy. Mr. John Knox.

The allegations to the prejudice of John, Earl of Gowrie, now require to be examined. It has been suggested, and by some persons affirmed, 1st, That

John, Earl of Gowrie, and his brother, Alexander Ruthven, made an attempt upon the life of King James VI., in revenge for his having put to death the late Earl their father. 2d, That John, Earl of Gowrie, was inordinately ambitious, and entertained hopes of succeeding to the crown of England. 3d, That in his endeavour to execute his purpose against the life of the King, he trusted for his own safety to a written amulet, which he commonly carried in his pocket. In the course of my narrative, I have occasionally noticed the falsity of what is contained in these allegations, but it is now proper that they should be more minutely considered.

1. It has been suggested, and by some persons affirmed, that John, Earl of Gowrie, and his brother Alexander Ruthven, made an attempt upon the life of King James VI., in revenge for his having put to death the late Earl their father.

But no deadly resentment, on that account, appears to have existed in the minds of the Gowrie family. When William, Earl of Gowrie, was beheaded at Stirling, May 4, 1584, the King, with respect to his age, could properly be only accounted a minor. Every thing at that time was manag-

ed by the unprincipled James Stewart, Earl of Arran, and his slavish party. The King, on his having got rid of the influence of this flagitious prime minister, immediately, in the year 1585, restored to the Gowrie family its former honours and estates, and heaped favours upon the children. The children well understood how their father's death had been really accomplished, and were grateful to the King for his singular kindnesses towards them.

In the first chapter of this, my biographical history of John, Earl of Gowrie, I fully stated the amicable correspondence which, when at Padua, in the year 1595, he carried on with the King. His letter to his Majesty, which I there inserted, evidently proceeded from a heart overflowing with grateful affection.

Before he came home, the King was indeed prejudiced against him, from his having heard of the principles he had adopted, with regard both to civil and to religious liberty, and of the splendid manner in which he had been entertained at the court of England. But the Earl, after his return to his native country, in February 1600, shewed no revengeful sentiment towards the King, but a disposition to live and to be obedient, in all lawful

matters, as a faithful subject. He soon, however, became sensible that the King did not love him, because of the patriotic principles he professed; but he meditated no evil against his Majesty, and rather seemed to have formed a resolution to intermeddle as little as he possibly could in the public affairs of the kingdom, that he might avoid giving offence.

It was no wonder that, when in Edinburgh, he did not relish his being frequently in the company of Colonel William Stewart, who was the person who had forcibly seized the late Earl his father, and had consigned him over to imprisonment and death. Yet, when the King reproached him for his cold behaviour to the Colonel, he only meekly replied, "Sir, I will never seek that man;" that is, to do him any hurt, "but it is not fit that he should cross my teeth," meaning, that he should not be so frequently thrusting himself in his way. The colonel, who was captain of the King's guard, had been the submissive tool of Arran in several atrocious actions which were committed.

Gowrie's brother, Mr. Alexander Ruthven, had been promoted to be a Gentleman of the King's Bed-Chamber. He had indeed, without any fault

of his own, fallen under the King's displeasure, and had, with permission, retired from the court then at Falkland. But he was anxious to regain the King's favour, and thought he had obtained it in the reception which he met with from the King at Falkland, where he had attended at his Majesty's own desire, on the morning of the fifth of August; and when the King was entertained in Gowrie's house at Perth, Mr. Ruthven, seemingly to the King's satisfaction, waited constantly upon him. I take no notice, at present, of Andrew Henderson's two depositions, which were inconsistent with, and contradictory to each other.

2. It has been suggested, and affirmed by some persons, that John, Earl of Gowrie, was inordinately ambitious, and entertained hopes of succeeding to the crown of England.

Bishop Burnet supposes, that "the Earl might be glad to put the King out of the way, that he might stand next in the succession to the crown of England *." In my dissertation on the parentage of Dorothea Stewart, Countess of Gowrie, I shewed, that though she could not be the imme-

* History of his own Times. Small edition, vol. i. page 20.

diate daughter of Queen Margaret, she might have been her grand-daughter, as being the child of the Master of Methven, who was killed at the battle of Pinkey, in the year 1547. If the Countess was the grand-daughter of Queen Margaret, then the Countess' son, John, Earl of Gowrie, was next to King James, the nearest heir to the crown of England. I have not absolutely affirmed that this was the case, but I think it a supposition highly probable, and greatly to be preferred to the undocumented assertion of Crawfurd, and of some other writers.

It would be too much to say, that a young man of Gowrie's talents and rank in life had no ambition. But it would be also too much to say, that a person of his good character would have sought to gratify his ambition, whatever it was, by embruing his hands in the blood of his sovereign.

It is proper that I should state the grounds on which is founded the charge of his indulging romantic hopes, and an unlawful ambition. The first I shall mention was brought forward by William Sanderson, Esq. in his " History of the Lives and Reigns of Queen Mary of Scotland; and of her Son and Successor of blessed memory, James the Sixth of Scotland, and First of Great Britain:

printed at London in the year 1656." He professes, in the title-page, that it was his purpose to vindicate that excellent King against two scandalous authors, first, the author of "The Court and Character of King James;" and next, the author of "The History of Great Britain." The author of this last book was a very respectable writer, Arthur Wilson, Esquire, who had published his history at London, in the year 1653.

Mr. Sanderson, agreeably to what he had professed in his title-page, is zealous in his vindication of the King, and, consequently, violent in his accusation of the Earl of Gowrie. He represents him as "extraordinarily ambitious, proud, and haughty;" which character of the Earl, given by Sanderson, I have already refuted in my second chapter. To prove that he was ambitious of sovereign power, Mr. Sanderson says, "I have a manuscript which relates, that in Padua, the Earl of Gowrie, among other impressa in a fencing-school, caused to be painted, for his devise, a hand and sword aiming at a crown*."

* Sanderson, page 226.

The truth of Sanderson's anecdote, though not with the construction he puts upon it, is confirmed by Mr. George Crawfurd, in his book of the Peerage of Scotland, who says, " I have in my hands an authentic copy of the Earl of Gowrie's arms, richly illuminated, in the year 1597, with his name and titles, viz. " Johannes Ruthven, Comes de Gowrie, Dominus de Ruthven." And then he adds, " on the Dexter," (that is, on the right and outside of one of the supporters,) " is a chevalier, garnished with the Earl's coat of arms, pointing with a sword upward to an imperial crown, with this device, ' Tibi soli,' " (To thee alone *.)

Mr. Crawfurd goes on to describe the coat of arms in the heraldic language. Sir Robert Douglas, in his Book of the Peerage, copies the description, omitting only the extra addition of the chevalier and sword. Mr. Crawfurd makes no remarks, and seems to have considered the whole as being the ancient armorial bearing of the Ruthven family. That it really was so, appears to be certified by this circumstance, that the whole of the coat of arms, as described by Mr. Crawfurd, en-

* Crawfurd's Peerage, page 166.

graven on a stone taken from Gowrie house in Perth, is preserved in the house of Freeland; and also, I have been told, a seal, with the same engraving upon it, which probably had been used by the Earls of Gowrie, and by their predecessors, the Lords of Ruthven.

If John Earl of Gowrie had, when at Padua, evinced his ambition of obtaining an imperial crown, by adding to his coat of arms the chevalier and sword, with the appropriate motto, he would thereby have offended his best friends, and furnished his enemies with a plausible charge against him in his after trial for treason. But at his trial no notice of his having done so was taken; and Sanderson seems to have been the first who represented the extra addition to the Earl's disadvantage. Sanderson's expression, "Aiming at a crown," Mr. Crawfurd rejects, by his saying, "Pointing to a crown." The family motto at the bottom of the shield, was "Facta probant," (deeds shew); and the chevalier's motto, in the extra addition, who was pointing his sword to an imperial crown, "Tibi soli," probably meant "To thy defence only, my sword is devoted."

I shewed, in my account of William the first Lord Ruthven, who was raised to the peerage, January 29, 1487-8, by King James III. that he was a steady friend to that unfortunate king, and zealously endeavoured to defend him in the possession of the crown, against the factious nobles who were aiming at his destruction. I supposed that this Baron of Ruthven, who assisted the King in his extremity in the summer of 1488, was, in gratitude, directed by the almost dethroned monarch, to add to his coat of arms a chevalier, garnished with the ancient armorial coat of the Ruthven family, pointing with a sword to the regal crown, as one of its determined supporters. In the battle near Falkirk, June 11, 1488, Lord Ruthven commanded the party which he had brought to aid the King. The royal army, however, was defeated, and the King, in his flight after the battle, was treacherously slain.

I happened not to have had in my possession Lindsay of Pitscottie's History of Scotland, when I wrote my account of the first Lord Ruthven. I shall now quote the words of that historian, in which he states the number and quality of the troops whom Lord Ruthven brought to King

James III. before the disastrous battle of Falkirk. His words are: "Alexander" (Mr. Lindsay should have said William) "Lord Ruthven, sheriff of Strathern, brought to the King a well favoured company of men, to wit, a thousand gentlemen well horsed, with jack and spear; a thousand bows, (bowmen or archers;) a thousand (fighting) men, with half long swords, and habergeons, (coats of mail;) in the whole three thousand. With St. Johnston, "(that is, with the strength or armed men of the town of Perth.) "These all passed to the King, in company with the Sheriff*."

Another ground on which John Earl of Gowrie has been accused of indulging romantic hopes, was his temporary residence at the court of England, and the confidence which Queen Elizabeth seemed to place in him. There can be little doubt of her having endeavoured to engage him to befriend her in her projects of keeping in a dependance upon herself her apparent heir, the King of Scots. This I have already fully shewed in my first chapter. I have there also conjectured, that the reward which she proposed to the Earl was her be-

* Pitscottie's Hist. page 72.

stowing upon him in marriage the Lady Arabella Stewart, who had a near affinity to the English crown, and of whom therefore King James was always exceedingly jealous. But of this proposal, if it was really made, or even rumoured or suspected, the Scottish King must have had information from his confidential friends in England.

It would be absurd to imagine that the Earl of Gowrie would have been averse to such a marriage. If he had married that lady, it would have been in Queen Elizabeth's power to have nominated them jointly to be her successors; for I reckon that the Earl, as well as the Lady, were the great-grand children of Queen Margaret; and King James himself was only also a great-grand son.

But I cannot suppose that the Earl, in order to obtain so flattering a prospect of a crown, would promise to do any violent injury to his own sovereign. His doing so would also have been contrary to all sound policy; for, if he had put the King to death, or even, as Queen Elizabeth wished, had sent him a prisoner to England, he would have rendered himself odious to his own countrymen; and it is most probable, that neither his countrymen, nor the King's friends, who were numerous

in England, would ever have submitted themselves to his kingly government. It was also probable, that Queen Elizabeth, notwithstanding her fair promises, would, after the Earl had served her purposes, not have found it for her interest to give her actual consent to his marriage with the Lady Arabella; and she would not have been much blamed for disappointing the hopes of an ambitious young man, when the consequence of her doing otherwise, would have been the disturbance of the quiet of her kingdom. I think therefore that the Earl should be acquitted of the folly and wickedness of engaging to commit any act of violence on the Scottish King.

I make no doubt that King James was highly irritated, on his hearing of some proposals, whatever they were, which were made to the Earl of Gowrie when in England. If the Earl, after he came home, presumed to request the King, not to oppose, but to grant his consent to his marriage with the Lady Arabella Stewart, his Majesty's indignation would thereby be increased; and he might judge it necessary hastily to cut him off, before he should boldly attempt to execute any bad project of Queen Elizabeth; or before he should

secretly return to England, to accomplish, without his Majesty's concurrence, the alliance of which he was ambitious. After the Earl's death, the King seems, by his publishing Henderson's depositions, in connection with his own printed narrative, to have been inclined to propagate an opinion, that the Earl sought to force him to give a promise of granting some unknown favour, and, in the case of his refusal, to make him a prisoner. The nature of the favour pretended was wisely not communicated to the public, for an explanation of it might have given offence to Queen Elizabeth. A hint of it was sufficient for the King's purpose. It was, however, commonly understood, that the King had refused his consent to the Earl's marriage; and a report became current, that an astrologer had foretold to the Earl of Gowrie, when abroad, that after he came home, "he should, through much love, fall into melancholy; should seek a wife; and die with his sword in his hand."

But whatever hopes the Earl of Gowrie might once have entertained of marrying the great Lady in England, he seems to have relinquished them about the time of his death; for, according to Calderwood, his views of marriage were at that time di-

rected to the Lady Margaret Douglas, daughter of the late Earl of Angus, as I shewed at some length in my third chapter.

3. It has been suggested and affirmed by some persons, that John Earl of Gowrie, in his endeavour to execute his purpose against the life of the King, trusted, for his own safety, to a written amulet, which he commonly carried in his pocket. This insinuation was keenly propagated after the Earl's death, and had the effect of stopping the mouths of some religious persons who had been complaining of the injustice done to him. It is therefore proper that I should enlarge in my consideration of it.

He was publicly accused of the crime of necromancy, by Mr. Patrick Galloway, in a sermon which he preached at the mercat cross of Edinburgh, August 11, 1600, who then gave the following character of him. "As for that man Gowrie, let none think that by this traitorous fact of his, our religion has received any blot, for one of our religion he was not, but a deep dissembling hypocrite, a profane Atheist, and an incarnate devil in an angel's coat, as is evident both by his traitorous fact, which he attempted, and by the things which

we have learned from his familiars, and most near and intimate friends. The books which he used, plainly prove, that he was a studier of magic, and conjurer with devils, and had them some way at his command*."

The above character of the Earl would be heard with indignation by those who had been witnesses of the whole of his behaviour, and knew the principles he had expressed when abroad, which endeared him to Beza, with whom he long resided, and to the other Protestant divines in the church of France. They would treat with ridicule what Mr. Galloway went on farther to say, viz. the Earl "was not a Protestant, but had held conferences with the Pope at Rome, with whom he had entered into covenants; and that after he came home, he had endeavoured to persuade the King to become, at least inwardly, a Papist, and offered to assist his Majesty in a private correspondence with the Pope†."

Mr. Galloway, in his sermon at the mercat cross of Glasgow, August 31, 1600, spoke much to the same purpose. He told the people that "the Earl

* Cald. MS. † Ibid.

studied necromancy when at Padua; that he had magical characters upon him when he was slain, and they who saw it testified that he could not bleed, so long as these characters were upon him*."

The story of the magical characters was early propagated. Nicolson, the English agent at Edinburgh, wrote, in a letter to Sir Robert Cecil, dated August 14, 1600, which was only nine days after the Earl's death, the following piece of information: "They say, that upon the Earl of Gowrie were found characters, some for love, blood, &c. and one of them, the last, 'contra potestatem divinæ majestatis,' viz. *against the power of sacred majesty*†." Nicolson had received his information from some of the courtiers.

In the King's narrative, which was published above a month after the Earl's death, the story is thus related: "His Majesty, before his passing out of the town of Perth, caused the Earl of Gowrie's pockets to be searched, in case any letters that might further the discovery of the conspiracy might be found therein. But nothing was found in them

* Cald. MS.

† Original in the Paper Office.

but a little parchment bag, full of magical words of enchantment, wherein it seemed he had put his confidence, thinking himself never safe without them, and therefore ever carried them about with him. It was also observed, that while they were upon him, his wound, whereof he died, bled not, but incontinent, after they were taken away, the blood gushed out in great abundance, to the great admiration of all the beholders*." From this it would appear that the King had faith in the power of amulets. He indeed shewed his belief in witchcraft, by his writing an elaborate treatise on what he called "Demonology."

Lord Hailes made the following remark on the above mentioned part of the King's narrative. "Gowrie's body was pierced by a small sword. The orifice of the wound must have been small, and it would seem that he bled inwardly at first, but afterwards more freely. This appears to be the simple fact, which ignorant and prejudiced spectators have ascribed to magical arts†."

According to the King's account, the magical words were contained in a little parchment bag

* Narrative, page 35. † Page 37.

found in the Earl's pocket. Sanderson says, the bag was found in his bosom. Spottiswood says, it was hanging at his girdle; and that "when the girdle was loosed and taken from him, the blood issued from him in abundance." Lord Cromarty says, "that the bag was found in Gowrie's girdle or belt; and that the papers in it consisted of two sheets, stitched in a little book of near five inches long, and three inches broad, full of magical spells and characters, which none can understand but those who exercise that art. His Lordship, though he could not find the papers at the time of his writing, was certain that he once had them in his possession*. Sanderson speaks confidently of a part of what was written on the papers. "Gowrie's body," says he, "did not bleed, until a parchment was taken out of his bosom, with characters; and these letters, which, put together, made "Tetragrammaton."

The word "Tetragrammaton" is Greek, and means, in that language, four letters. I am informed by dictionaries, that it was applied to indicate the sacred name "Jehovah," which consists

* Sanderson, p. 228. Spottiswood, p. 459. Cromarty, Preface, p. 13.

of four letters in the Hebrew. It was supposed that this word, when pronounced with faith, was accompanied with a powerful efficacy, and therefore was used as a charm or amulet. If each letter was written separately in the Latin, Greek, and Hebrew characters, they would appear mysterious to them who had not learned how to arrange them.

There were two persons who had been examined at Falkland, the first with a view to shew that the Earl paid regard to charms and enchantments; and the other to shew that he was solicitous to be always carrying in his pocket papers on which were written what were supposed to be magical characters.

James Wemyss of Bogie's deposition was taken at Falkland, August 9th, 1600. This young gentleman, whose estate lay in the county of Fife, was the Earl's cousin, and had accompanied him, in July, 1600, to the deer hunting at Strathbraan, in the district of Athol. Being interrogated if he had any conversation with the Earl of Gowrie "about things curious," he said, that when he was with him in the Highlands, some of their company found an adder and killed it. The Earl said

to him, " Bogie, if they had not slain it, I would have shewed you a good sport, for I would have made it stand, so that it could not have passed away." Bogie asked how that could happen. The Earl answered, " I could have done it by a Hebrew word, which, in the Scottish language, means ' Holiness,' and I have done the same sometimes before." Mr. Wemyss then asked where he had got that Hebrew word. The Earl said he had got it in a " cabbalist" of the Jews, and that the " cabbalist" consists of words which God spake to Adam in Paradise, which were of greater efficacy than any which were afterwards excogitate by prophets and apostles. " But that a firm faith in God was necessary in pronouncing the words ; and that such things were natural, and not matters of marvel, amongst scholars."

The Earl also said, that he had " spoken with a man in Italy who was reputed a necromancer, but he was afterwards informed that he was a very learned man, and a deep theologist (divine), and that he entered into dealing with him anent the curiosities of nature."

If the Earl sometimes before had succeeded in the experiment of charming an adder, of which

many have boasted, he must have used other means, which he did not mention, than merely pronouncing in Hebrew the word "Holiness." He was evidently diverting himself, in making Mr. Wemyss to wonder at the great learning he had acquired when abroad. If he had intended to employ magical arts to accomplish any bad design which he had in his view, he would have been very far from speaking so freely to his unlearned friend. Mr. Wemyss, indeed, "counselled the Earl to beware with whom he did communicate such speeches as he had now had with him." The Earl answered, that "he would speak of them only to great scholars, for they might be evil interpreted amongst the common sort, and that he would not have so spoken to Mr. Wemyss, if he had not known him to be a favourer of him, and a friend of his house, and that he would not reveal to his prejudice any part of their free conversation."

Mr. William Panton, in his Treatise on the Gowrie Conspiracy, speaks unfavourably of Mr. Wemyss. According to the account given of him by that author, it should appear that he was not so young a man as I had apprehended him to be. He had been pardoned several times, and was now

of the King's bedchamber, and hoped for higher preferment. He therefore sought to please the King, and to assist in relieving him from his present embarrassment, by relating his conversation with the Earl of Gowrie about "curious matters," in such a manner as might tend to the disadvantage of the Earl's character*.

The Earl's travelling tutor, Mr. William Rhind, had also been examined at Falkland. His first deposition there was taken, August 20, 1600; and his second, August 22d. He was cruelly treated. Nicolson, the English agent, in a letter to Sir Robert Cecil, dated August 21, 1600, says, "Mr. William Rhind, the pedagogue, hath been extremely booted, but confesseth nothing in that matter against the earl and his brother†."

I find, in a recent publication, the following description of that engine of torture called "the boots." "The prisoner's leg was put into a strong wooden box, inclosed with iron hoops, called the boot; and the executioner drove a wedge with such violence between the prisoner's leg and the inside of the box, that it occasioned the most exquisite tor-

* Panton, page 80.
† Original in the paper office.

tures; and the unhappy victim, in the height of his agony, was forced to confess every thing of what he was accused, whether guilty or not*." Calderwood says, "Mr. William Rhind was tortured in the boots, wherein he got many chops, so that his legs were crushed, and he sorely tormented†."

From what I have found in the Perth Session Records, and in MS. chronicles, I now give the following brief account of this venerable gentleman, who was brought into the above mentioned trouble in consequence of his unguarded conversations with Mr. Patrick Galloway. He was the son of Sir Robert Rhind, who, before the Reformation, was the officiating chaplain at two of the altars in the parish church of Perth. William, the son, was educated at the university of Edinburgh, and was early appointed private tutor to John, Earl of Gowrie. He was with the Earl all the time he was abroad, and continued with him after he came home. After the Earl's death, he lived in Perth, greatly respected, and died there, in a good old age, upon Saturday, August 9, 1628.

* Border Exploits, page 252.
† Cald. MS.

The purport of what he declared at his first examination, when under the torture, was, that when he was attending on the Earl at Padua, he went for a little space of time on a visit to Venice. Having returned, he found that the Earl was carrying in his pocket some papers marked with Latin and Hebrew characters, which he offered to take from him; but the Earl would not allow him, saying, "Let them alone, for they can do you no harm." Mr. Rhind sometimes would have burnt them, if he had not been afraid of my Lord's anger. The reason why he disliked them was, he had heard that "breeves" were given to sundry folks in that country, by which he probably understood Popish exorcisms and dispensations; but he had no suspicion of the Earl being a necromancer. He asked the Earl where he had got the characters, who answered that he had copied them himself. Mr. Rhind knew that the Latin characters were of my Lord's own hand-writing, but was not certain that he had also written the Hebrew characters. Mr. Patrick Galloway had shewed him the papers since he came to Falkland; and he told Mr. Galloway they were the same which he had seen at Padua.

No distinct account was given of what were supposed to be Latin and Hebrew characters. They were most probably marks and signs which appeared to resemble them. If they were really Latin and Hebrew words, surely there were then some men in Scotland sufficiently learned to have explained them if they had been submitted to their perusal. The Earl, Mr. Rhind says, always put the papers into his pocket in the morning. But surely the Earl, if he had thought them necessary for his safety, would have had them upon him through the night, as well as through the day.

There are perhaps now, as there were also in the former times, persons who carry about with them, usually hanging from their necks, or fixed round their arms, what they foolishly say are amulets, charms, or preservatives against particular diseases or disasters. But they are not so weak as to take encouragement from them to rush, without necessity, into manifest danger. The understanding of John, Earl of Gowrie, must have been far below that of the rest of mankind, if, trusting for his own safety to a fancied spell in his pocket, he had ventured to attack the liberty or the life of the King in the midst of his nobles, and when he must have

been sensible that, if he had succeeded, almost every man in the kingdom would have loudly called upon him to give an account of what he had done with their sovereign.

The religion in which he had been educated, and which he seemed always piously to profess, taught him that it would be presumptuous in any person to look for the divine protection in enterprises which are rash and inconsiderate, and highly impious to seek it in actions which are unlawful. The supposition of his having been guilty of the extreme folly and gross impiety attributed to him by his enemies, I think, therefore, ought to be rejected.

The Latin book, entitled "Ruvenorum Conjuratio," (the Conspiracy of the Ruthvens,) was printed in 4to. at Edinburgh in the year 1601. The author of it, whoever he was, having, in his preface, violently accused the late Earl of Gowrie of necromancy, on account of his carrying written papers, with unknown characters, in his pocket, adds, that "Gowrie's friends were ridiculous, who sought to vindicate, by their own foolish interpretations, the characters written on the papers found upon him." Lord Hailes shrewdly says, "I wish

the author had informed us what were the foolish explications which the friends of the Earl of Gowrie employed in order to vindicate him from the charge of witchcraft*."

I before conjectured, in my first chapter, and still reckon it most probable, that the Earl, when attending the university of Padua, procured and copied some written notes, and scientifical signs and characters, to assist him in the study of the different parts of natural philosophy, to which kind of philosophy he seems to have been peculiarly addicted; and that afterwards he thought it convenient to carry them in his pocket, to be used by him as occasions should offer. The marks and characters employed in the studies of astronomy, chemistry, algebra, and the branches of the mathematical sciences, are indeed so uncouth in their appearance, that, in the time in which the Earl lived, they might easily have been mistaken by unlearned men for characters which were supposed to have a magical or preternatural influence. The papers should have been submitted to the examination of men of the most extensive erudition, with

* Hailes' Pamphlet, p. 35.

full liberty granted them to express their opinion, whatever it should be; but this was not done. They were only viewed by courtiers, and some other interested persons of no deep learning; and, consequently, as might have been expected, the design of them was judged to be bad. According to Lord Cromarty's account, Sir Thomas Erskine, who had taken the papers from the Earl of Gowrie's pocket, after some little time, delivered them to his brother, Sir George Erskine of Invertile, who kept them in his custody; and, after Sir George's death, they fell into the hands of Lord Cromarty himself, who says that at length he had mislaid them; and that they were full of magical spells and characters, though he owns that he did not understand them*.

I find, from a catalogue of new books, advertised at London so late as the year 1658, that astronomers, who were laudably occupied in observing the distances and motions of the heavenly bodies, and those who foolishly asserted and pretended to the knowledge of the planetary influences on the actions and destinies of men, were all comprehend-

* Crom. Preface, p. 13.

ed under the general name of astrologers. One book is entitled, "New Jerusalem, a Sermon for the Society of Astrologers;" and another, which had been first printed in the year 1642, is entitled, "Divinity no Enemy to Astrology, by Dr. Thomas Swadling." Chemists who ventured to exhibit experiments, to shew the secret and various powers of nature, were very generally suspected of being magicians, and often boldly pronounced practisers of what was called "the black art."

In Scotland, as in other countries, there were multitudes of people who gave implicit credit to the frequency as well as reality of the crime of witchcraft. King James VI. encouraged his subjects in their belief of diabolical connections, by his book entitled "Demonology," meaning the doctrine concerning devils. It was too much the custom of malevolent persons to calumniate eminently good men, to whom they were enemies, as having consulted with wizards, and practised magical charms and incantations. The Earl's grandfather, Patrick Lord Ruthven, and his father, William Earl of Gowrie, had been so calumniated by their political enemies. It was no wonder, therefore, that the

young Earl of Gowrie, when every thing was eagerly sought after which could tend to injure his character, was traduced as his religious ancestors had been*.

Even the pious Mr. John Knox, the successful Scottish Reformer, was reproached by the Popish party as a necromancer. In the first conference which he had with Queen Mary, after her arrival from France in the year 1561, which, on both sides, was carried on with a remarkable degree of good temper, the Queen at last frankly said, "Mr. John, I have been told that all that you have done was by the power of necromancy." To which Mr. Knox's reply was as follows: "Madam, whereas they slander me of magic, necromancy, and other such arts as God has forbidden, I have witnesses beside my own conscience, even all the congregations that ever heard me preach, that I have spoken both against such sinful arts, and against those who use them. But seeing that the wicked of this world said that my Master, the Lord Jesus, was possessed

* Spottiswood, p. 332. Keith, Appendix, p. 125. King's Narrative, p. 38.

with Beelzebub, I must patiently bear, when I, a wretched sinner, am also accused by them, who never delighted in the verity*."

* Knox's History, p. 288, 289,

CHAPTER IX.

CONTENTS.

A French Physiognomist. Astrologers. Horoscopes. Old MS. Book on the Planets, by Dr. Thomas Moulton. Account of Lord Maderty, and of Dame Lilias Ruthven, Lady Drummond. Mr. John Freebairn, Minister of Maderty. Gowrie's Horoscope. Henderson's Character, and the Falsities in his Depositions. Edinburgh MS. Calderwood. The King's early Declaration concerning the Man in Armour. Remarks by Lord Hailes. Remarks by Principal Robertson. The Earl and his Brother innocent. Henderson afterwards unhappy.

It appears from a free conversation which the Earl of Gowrie had with his cousin, James Wemyss of Bogie, when together at the deer hunting in Athole, that the Earl, when abroad, being at a concert of music, was troubled with a man who, staring him in the face, spake concerning him things to the company, of which the Earl thought himself unworthy, and which he never could attain.

He reprimanded the man, and desired him to forbear such speeches. But he met with him again in another company, and found that he persisted in speaking of him such things as he had done before.

The Earl, being much displeased with him, was provoked to say, "My friend, if you will not otherwise refrain from speaking lyes of me, I will make you hold your peace by speaking truth of you."—He at last was so much provoked as to say, "Within a short space you will commite a crime for which you will be hanged." The Earl told Mr. Wemyss that "so it came to pass." "But," said Mr. Wemyss, "how could you know that such an event could happen?" The Earl "merrily answered, I spoke it by guess; and so it fell out*."

The ungovernable physiognomist had probably caused some great mischief to some weak minded persons, by his bold and hazardous predictions, and therefore was accounted deserving of death.

But the Earl could not escape from being troubled also with judicial astrologers, who no doubt expected to receive money from him. In the century

* Wemyss' Deposition.

in which John Earl of Gowrie lived, and in the century which succeeded, many persons, especially in the higher ranks of life, were desirous of being furnished with what are called "horoscopes," that is, with prognostications of their future fortunes, founded on the positions and junctions of the planets at the time of their nativity. For this purpose, they were generally careful to mark, not only the year, the month, and day of the month, but also the hour of the day or night in which a child was born.

I have now before me a list of eight children of James Drummond of Innerpeffray, afterwards Lord Maderty, and of his Lady Jean Chisholme of Cromlix, born to them betwixt the years 1578 and 1589. The births of the children are marked in the manner I have above mentioned.

The list is written on the blank leaf of an old MS. book, which is now the property of "the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth." In the first part of the book, are descriptions of diseases, and numerous medical receipts, given by a physician, who is there styled, "The Great Doctor Nicholas Mede." In the second part, information is given "how the planets do reign in every hour of the day and night, with the nature and exposi-

tion of the twelve signs, divided by the twelve months of the year." This second part was written by "Thomas Moulton, Doctor of Divinity, of the Order of the Friars Preachers," in the time of a great pestilence; and he ascribes the pestilence which was then raging, principally to the conjunction of the planets Saturn and Jupiter.

This book originally belonged to Dame Lilias Ruthven Lady Drummond, daughter of William the second Lord Ruthven, and aunt to William the first Earl of Gowrie. She was a pious and benevolent Lady, celebrated by Calderwood and Lord Viscount Strathallan in their MS. Collections. I persuade myself that she was a more sensible and religious woman, than to have her faith depending on the supposed influence of the stars, on the affairs and destinies of men; and I make no doubt that the medical receipts and descriptions of diseases, given both by Doctor Mede, and Doctor Moulston, were of much use to her in her pious endeavours to relieve the distresses of poor sick people. Upon this account the book was then reckoned valuable. After her death, it belonged to her second son, James Drummond, Lord Maderty. He gave it to Mr. John Freebairn, minister of Maderty.

who was a man much employed in historical researches; and Mr. Freebairn, April 4, 1648, "bequeathed it to a noble Lady, Dame Anna Gordon, Lady Drummond." It was by a present from Mr. John Gillies, bookseller, who was a curious collector of old MSS., that it became the property of the Perth Antiquarian Society.

It is far from being improbable, that, according to the fashion of the times, the hour of the day or night, as well as the year and month, in which John Earl of Gowrie was born, would be marked either by his parents or by some other persons. If implicit credit can be given to a gentleman of the name of Colvil, who was his cotemporary, and to William Sanderson the historian, a French astrologer had learned from the Earl himself, or by some other means, the most exact date of the Earl's birth. He consulted the stars, or pretended to consult them, and then declared to him his destiny in the usual oracular manner.

Nicolson the English agent at Edinburgh, in a letter to Sir Robert Cecil, dated November 12, 1600, which was during the time in which the trial of the Earl and his brother by the Scottish Parliament was going on, says, "One Colvil has sent to

the King, a collection of the fortunes which were to befall the Earl of Gowrie made upon his nativity, written with the Earl's own hand in French at Orleans, and there found, containing, that he should return, be in great credit, seek for a wife, and yet die with his sword in his hand before he should be married *." Mr. John Colvil, who transmitted the written prediction, had been secretary to Francis Stewart, Earl of Bothwell, and aiding to him in his romantic attempts against the King. Colvil was pardoned, and was now residing in France, but was desirous of obtaining a farther degree of favour, by transmitting to his Majesty what he thought might tend to the prejudice of the character of the Earl of Gowrie.

William Sanderson's account, whose history was published in 1656, is in some small degree different. He says, " The Earl of Argyle, (this man's father, in 1652,) told the King, that in a house at Orleans in France, where the Earl of Gowrie had been lodged, he found a prophecy, viz. that he should with too much love fall into melancholy, have great

* Nicolson's Letter in the Paper Office. Lord Hailes' Pamphlet, page 43.

power and rule, and die by the sword *." Sanderson afterwards says, that according to the prophecy, Gowrie had a great power and rule, when in his own house at Perth he had the King at his disposal.

If the Earl, as Colvil represented, really wrote or copied the astrologer's prediction, he must have done it merely for his own amusement and that of his friends; for, if he had paid to it any serious regard, he would not have been so careless of preserving what he had written, as to leave it, as Sanderson represents, in the inn or house at Orleans in which he had lodged. Neither was there any thing so tempting in the prediction, as to induce or encourage him to a hazardous enterprise against the life or liberty of the King. It was calculated rather to discourage him from attempting any enterprise of that kind.

I think it most probable, that the prophecy, as it is called, was fabricated after his death, to be made use of to his disadvantage at the time of his trial. It was artfully expressed in such words as might be thought applicable to the circumstances of the tragical event which had lately happened; and

* Sanderson, page 226.

though the Earl might be reckoned ambitious of acquiring some knowledge of all kinds of learning which were then in repute, yet there is reason to believe, that his mind was superior to being swayed to any action by the common mercenary practices of fortune-tellers, or of those who pretended on merely imaginary grounds, such as the influences of the planets, and of constellations or collections of stars, to the knowledge of futurity. It may well also be presumed, that his regard to religion, for which he was remarkable, would be a bar to his taking counsel in any other way than in what he was assured was agreeable to the written word of God.

It may now, I think, appear evident, that excepting what was contained in the depositions of Andrew Henderson, afterwards to be noticed, nothing was brought forward against the Earl and his brother, but what might justly have been interpreted in their favour. The character of Henderson, and the inconsistencies in his depositions, come now to be considered.

According to his own account, he was, when examined in the year 1600, about thirty-eight years

of age. The MSS. before me, in which the traditionary accounts were regarded, say that he was born in the town of Peebles, in the county of Tweeddale; that "he was bred to letters," most probably as an attorney; and that he emigrated to Perth about the year 1595, where he seems to have engaged in some mercantile branch of business, and was elected a member of the town-council. While the Earl of Gowrie was abroad, Henderson was recommended to him as a proper person to be his chamberlain or factor on his estate of Scoon. The Earl accordingly appointed him to that office, and when he came home placed confidence in him. But the MSS. say, that "he was poor and profligate when he came to Perth; that he had left his wife and family at Peebles, and lived at Perth and Scoon in adultery with a woman whom he falsely called his wife *."

He was a man who in one way or other, in the early part of his life, had rendered himself famous. Mr. Patrick Galloway, in the sermon which he preached at the cross of Edinburgh, August 11, 1600, said "Henderson is a man well enough

* Edinburgh MS. and Stewart's MS. Collections.

known to this town," viz. of Edinburgh *. Mr. William Cowper, then one of the ministers of Perth, spake of him in a favourable manner, in the sermon which he preached in the church of Edinburgh, August 24, 1600. He said, " I have known Andrew Henderson these four or five years bygone, and can give no other witness, but that which both town and country will give unto him, that is, the testimony of a man that feareth God, and dealt uprightly with all men †. Mr. Cowper was his parish minister, and surely would not have spoken of him so favourably, if he had been certified of any part of his bad behaviour. But Archbishop Spottiswood speaks of him more impartially. He says, " It was marvelled, that in so high an attempt" (meaning the alleged conspiracy) " the Earl should have made choice of such a one as Andrew Henderson. But the man was of a servile spirit, and apt enough to do mischief ‡."

Henderson, indeed, found himself in a very hazardous situation after the death of the Earl and

* Calderwood's MS.

† Manuscript Sermon in my possession.

‡ Spottiswood's History, page 459.

his brother. The King and his friends were employing, without any remorse, the imperious hand of power. They were determined to find a man who should confess that he had put on armour at the command of the late Earl, and was inclosed with the King and Mr. Alexander Ruthven. It was necessary to corroborate, by the evidence of such a man, the romantic story which it was agreed the King himself should publish of the whole affair. Henderson had been a confidential servant of the late Earl of Gowrie, and it was more than probable that he would soon be seized and examined by torture, to make him confess what he knew of the Earl's designs; and that, if he gave no satisfaction, he afterwards would be executed, as Cranston and two others had been, by the ruthless hand of power.

I took some notice, in my sixth chapter, of the manner in which Henderson was persuaded to offer himself as a witness of what had passed between the King and Mr. Ruthven in Gowrie House. I there mentioned Calderwood's report of his having been moved to make the offer by Mr. Patrick Galloway. The Edinburgh MS. and Stewart in his MS. Collections, ascribe it also to the suggestion

and influence of Sir David Murray, comptroller;—Stewart adds these words; "Henderson was liberally rewarded. He was continued chamberlain at Scoon, was allowed to retain the bygone rents, and got a gift of the lands of Hallyards, part of Gowrie's forfeiture, where there is a mount still called Gowrie's Hill."

But it was not only the general character which he bore, which invalidated his testimony in the opinion of many persons, for there were also in his depositions falsities and inconsistencies which may be mentioned as follows:

I. He said, that in the morning of the fifth of August, he accompanied Mr. Alexander Ruthven to Falkland, and soon returned to acquaint the Earl that the King was coming to Perth. But it was denied by many people that he had been at Falkland. If he really had been there, it could easily have been proved by persons who had seen him there that morning. But none were called for that purpose. Their evidence, if they had given it, would have been of great service to the cause of the King, for it would have shewed that the King did not come upon the Earl in a surprise. Mr. John Moncrief deposed, that in his road to

Perth that morning, he met with Andrew Henderson, who told him that he had been riding two or three miles "above the town," that is, two or three miles west from Perth. If so, he could not then have gone so far toward the south as Falkland, and could not now be on his way from that town.

Indeed, George Hay, and his brother Peter Hay, deposed, that they being in Gowrie's House in the forenoon of the fifth of August, conversing with the Earl on some county business, Henderson, in his boots, came into the room where they were. They do not say that they heard him tell where he had been; but that the Earl asked him what persons were with the King at Falkland. The question may have related to what news of the King he had heard from the people of the country in his morning ride.

II. Notwithstanding that Henderson affirmed in both his depositions, that August the 5th he had been shut up with the King and Mr. Alexander Ruthven, in a private apartment in Gowrie's house, there are very convincing reasons why we should believe that he was not there.

1. The account which he gives of the manner of his being shut up is improbable. Gowrie, he says

commanded him to arm himself, that he might be ready to assist him in apprehending a notorious robber; and, as a thing necessary for that purpose, commanded him to be locked into a closet at the top of the south-west turret of Gowrie House, there to remain till Mr. Alexander Ruthven should come to give him further orders. He continued locked in the closet, he says, about half an hour, which was till the King had dined, knowing of no other object which the Earl had in view than that of apprehending the robber. But it is not credible that the Earl would act so preposterously; and Henderson must have been of a weaker mind than all other men, if he had not been sensible of the absurdity of what was enjoined him, and remonstrated against it.

2. He says that he ran down the narrow turnpike after he had opened the door at the head of it, for the admission of his Majesty's servants, and Sir John Ramsay had entered. Ramsay says that he found the door at the head of the turnpike shut, and drove it open by using his whole force; and that he also saw a man standing behind the King's back whom he knew not, but who soon disappeared.

If Henderson had been the man whom Ramsay saw, he most probably would have known him. If he ran down the narrow turnpike he must have been seen coming from thence by the people in the close, by whom he was generally known. But none were called to declare that they had seen him, though their giving such evidence would have been of the most signal importance to the cause of the King.

Mr. William Cowper, indeed, said in his sermon to the people of Edinburgh, " I will bear to you record, that it is verified to me by honest men of our town, (Perth,) that Henderson was seen coming down the stair from the chamber where the King was before any of the King's servants, except only John Ramsay, or before my Lord entered in." But it may be asked, why Mr. Cowper, who was very zealous in serving the King, did not report to his Majesty's lawyers the names of these " honest men," that they might have been called to declare who the persons were that had seen Henderson?

3. In the Edinburgh MS. in which use was made of the tradition of the inhabitants of Perth, it is confidently said, that " it is well known to

this day, and formerly could have been proved by a hundred witnesses, that at the very time when Gowrie was killed, Henderson was seen walking on the Tay bridge of Perth, and therefore could not be the man said to be in the closet." Again, "That he was the man said to be in armour was known to be a falsehood, for he was seen that day coming from Scoon to Perth on foot, and having heard that the King was in Gowrie's house and the gate shut, walked on the bridge till all was over."

4. Henderson owns that he was without his helmet when he said he was in the chamber along with the King and Mr. Ruthven; and that he had only his sword and dagger. His helmet, or cap of steel, was indeed lying in his own house, from whence Gowrie afterwards took it. His face was quite uncovered. His Majesty, therefore, who, it afterwards appears, was well acquainted with Henderson, could not have been at a loss to declare, when the affair was over, that Henderson was the man. He made however a very early declaration, that he was not the man who had been with him in the study.

I rely on the authority of Mr. David Calderwood, who was living at the time, and shall quote

the words of that historian. "In the first proclamation after the slaughter, the armed man, who should have assisted Mr. Alexander to slay the King, was named Oliphant, and described to be a black grim man. But Henderson was not a black grim man, but a man of lower stature, ruddy countenance, and brown bearded. It was therefore collected that he could not be the man. Yea, the King himself being demanded the day after the fact, while he was hunting, by the good-man of Pitmenie, whether Andrew Henderson was the man? answered, that it was not he, for he knew that smack (fellow) well enough."

Indeed, the King in his Narrative, never lays the blame on Andrew Henderson, although the Narrative was not published till after Henderson's first confession. The King's early declaration to the good-man of Pitmenie ought to have prevented any attention from being given to Henderson as a witness; and it is wonderful how the King afterwards was persuaded to allow the examinations of him to go on.

Almost every writer who has taken notice of Gowrie's alleged conspiracy, has pointed out falsehoods and inconsistencies in the evidence which

was brought forward. As I wish not to be tedious, I shall only mention some remarks made by Lord Hailes and Principal Robertson.

First, By Lord Hailes.—The printed Narrative says, that Mr. Alexander Ruthven went down from the study and gallery chamber to consult with the Earl his brother; and that during Mr. Alexander's absence, the King had some serious conversation with the man in armour. But Henderson says, that "he does not believe that Mr. Alexander passed from the door." The Duke of Lennox deposes, that "the Earl of Gowrie passed up, and incontinent" (that is, immediately) "came again into the close." Lord Hailes remarks, that "Gowrie had neither time nor opportunity for conferring with his brother Alexander; and that besides, he could not possibly have known the precise moment at which his brother Alexander was to leave the closet *."

I have shewed, in my fourth chapter, that Gowrie went up the broad stair into the gallery, that he might report to the Duke of Lennox and the Earl of Mar, whether the King was gone away to

* Hailes' Pamphlet, page 24.

Falkland; and that at the west end of the long gallery he found a person waiting at the door of the study and gallery chamber, who I suppose was Sir Thomas Erskine, who said to him that the King was away. The Earl "incontinent," or instantly, came down, and informed the two noblemen that the King was away.

The King's Narrative says, that the same instant when Mr. Alexander left the King in the little study, he Mr. Alexander run down the stairs in great haste. "This is strange," says Lord Hailes; "had he run down the little stair, he would not have met with his brother, who had gone up the broad stair into the gallery, but must have met with the King's attendants in the close. If he ran down the principal stair, the circumstance of his meeting there with his brother, if he had met with him, could not have been known to the King or Henderson, because the principal stair was at a distance from them. I think," his Lordship adds, "that Mr. Alexander did not run down any stair at all *."

* Hailes' Pamphlet, page 24.

Second. By Principal Robertson *sub anno* 1600. —1. According to the King's account, while Mr. Ruthven was holding the dagger at his breast, the fellow in the study stood quaking and trembling. But Henderson represents himself as having been very brave, for that he wrested the dagger out of Mr. Ruthven's hands; that he afterwards snatched away the garter with which Mr. Ruthven attempted to bind the King's hands; that he pulled back Ruthven's hands while he was endeavouring to stop the King's mouth; and that he opened the window.

2. The King asserts, that Henderson opened the window during Mr. Ruthven's absence. Henderson deposes, that he was only attempting to open it when Mr. Ruthven returned, and that during the struggle between the King and him, he, viz. Henderson himself, opened it.

3. By the King's account, Mr. Ruthven left him in the study, and went away in order to meet with his brother, and the Earl came up the stairs for the same purpose. Henderson deposes, that when Mr. Ruthven left the King, he believes that he did not pass from the door. It is apparent, both from the situation of the house, and from other circumstan-

ces, that there could not possibly have been an interview between the brothers at this time.

4. There is this variation in Henderson's two depositions. In the first, he represents it to have been Mr. Ruthven's intention to put the King instantly to death. In the second, he represents that it was Mr. Ruthven's intention only to make the King a prisoner.

Other writers have noticed other disparities in the depositions. It seems to be clear that Henderson was not shut up with the King and Mr. Ruthven, and consequently his testimony ought to have been disregarded. His evidence being rejected, there remains nothing in what was brought forward in the trial of the two brothers, which could convict them of the crime of treason. They must have fallen as a sacrifice to the crooked policy of the King, and to the ambition of some courtiers, who hoped to have Gowrie's forfeited estates divided amongst them.

But notwithstanding the property which Henderson had acquired, he was always afterwards unhappy. He was generally abhorred by the people; and Archbishop Spottiswood says, "He ever after

looked like a man half distracted *." The Ministers of State, and those who had been benefited by Gowrie's forfeiture, endeavoured in vain to support his character by continuing their rewards.

We learn some farther particulars concerning him from the late Mr. James Cant's publication of the ancient lists of the Magistrates of Perth. That respectable gentleman had consulted the records of the town, and informs us, that, October 6, 1600, the town-council of Perth deprived Andrew Henderson of his seat amongst them, because he had confessed himself to have been the man in armour, and was now confined under a summons to compear before the Parliament. They did this, though they had received a letter from the King, dated at Brechin, September 28, 1600, in which he had desired them to make no changes at their ensuing election. But, October 4, 1603, Henderson being recommended by their Provost Sir David Murray, whose chamberlain he was on the estate of Scoon, was not only restored to his place in the council, but elected one of their merchant bailies. Their election of him to the office of a magistrate was,

* Spottiswood's History, page 459.

however, very unpopular, and he never again was chosen *.

He seems to have retired to some distant part of the kingdom, and Sanderson, whose history was published in the year 1656, says of him, "Henderson had a large pension confirmed by Parliament, and died not long since †."

As, according to Sanderson, Henderson lived to a great age, he had time to consider his past ways, and to repent of any evil he had done. I shall only farther say concerning him, that to all appearance he was a timid, and, to adopt the mildest language, a deluded man.

* Cant's Lists of the Magistrates of Perth, pages 95, 96.

† Sanderson's History, page 229.

CHAPTER X.

CONTENTS.

Concluding Observations. Moyses' Memoirs. Scott of Scotstarvet's Remarks. A Hope expressed of more direct Evidence. Calderwood's Reflections. Spottiswood's Remarks on George Sprott and Robert Logan of Restalrig. Letters forged by Sprott. The Earl of Gowrie was not at Perth, at the pretended Dates of these Letters.

HAVING in the course of my narrative, explained the facts brought forward at the trial of John Earl of Gowrie, and his brother Mr. Alexander Ruthven, and made many remarks, I reckon it unnecessary to enlarge in my concluding observations. These I shall arrange in the following order.

1. The Earl and his brother were young men who bore an excellent character, for their pious regard to religion, the purity of their morals, and their amiable dispositions. The character of James

VI. may be learned from the generality of historians. Among other bad things, he had adopted a corrupt system of state policy, which he called "King-craft." Agreeably to which, and as one who reckoned that he had an absolute right to dispose of the lives and properties of his subjects, he thought himself justifiable in taking away the lives of those persons, by private assassination or by poison, who were obnoxious to him, or opposers of his favourite schemes of government. It is generally believed that he did so in two memorable instances, viz. in procuring the private murder of the Earl of Murray in the year 1592; and the death of the Lady Arabella Stewart by poison in the Tower of London, in the year 1615.

2. I have shewed in my narrative, that the Earl and his brother were not actuated by a desire of revenge for the death of their father; for they well knew, that the king, when their father was condemned, was really a minor, and entirely under the imperious direction of the flagitious James Stewart, Earl of Arran.

3. The young Earl of Gowrie was not actuated by an inordinate ambition. Though the English Queen might be urging him to take some strong

measures against the Scottish king, whom she wished to retain in a dependence upon her pleasure, with regard to his succession to the crown of England, he and his brother must have known, that any traitorous attempt against the life and liberty of the King, would have lost to them the favour of their friends, and that even Elizabeth herself, according to her well known political character, would have been amongst the first to reprobate their conduct.

4. A treasonable attempt made by the Earl and his brother, without any accomplices, against the King at Perth, who was there in the midst of his nobles, and where some hundreds of armed horsemen, chiefly gentlemen from the country, had assembled to be ready to defend him, and take directions from him, can only be credible on the supposition, that the two brothers had become suddenly deranged in their judgment, and in their frenzy rushed to perpetrate a hazardous and atrocious crime. But no signs of insanity appeared upon them. They were esteemed, and spoken to, as reasonable men.

5. Both of them might easily have been confined as prisoners, when, first, Mr. Alexander, and

next, the Earl himself, were overpowered by the King's attendants. Their trial afterwards might have taken place, and it would have been more honourable for the King to have tried them during their lives, than after their death. But, in this case, they might have proved their innocency, and then the Earl's estates would not have been forfeited, and divided among the active instruments in the King's service.

6. The procurement of the false depositions of Andrew Henderson, shewed what was the predetermined purpose of the King, and of his reputed friends. Instead of serving the cause of the King, it brought an indelible stain upon his character, in the opinion of the most intelligent persons among his subjects.

7. It is not impossible, and perhaps highly probable, that the Earl of Gowrie, after his return to Scotland, continued to correspond with Queen Elizabeth, on such matters as he thought were consistent with his own honour and the good of his country. This appears to me to be the most probable ground on which the Jacobite writers in the last century, such as Lord Cromarty and George Crawfurd, could have founded their charge of

guilt against the Earl, if there was really any guilt in it. The correspondence, whatever it contained, could not be concealed from the King, who employed spies, and had many friends in England, to inform him of what passed at the English court. Any such correspondence, especially when carried on by so popular a nobleman as the Earl of Gowrie, would alarm the King, who was averse to the influence of English councils, and always exceedingly afraid of any occurrence which might in any degree impede his easy and peaceable accession to the crown of England. He might, therefore, judge it most expedient to put an end to the offensive correspondence by the Earl's death, whom he also considered as a most formidable opponent to all his most favourite schemes in church and state. He came unexpectedly upon the Earl at Perth, followed by an uncommonly large retinue of courtiers and menial servants, and where he had previously taken care that a great number of armed friends should be assembled to secure his own personal safety.

David Moyses informs us, that there were "five hundred gentlemen at St. Johnston, August 5, 1600, who saw with their eyes the form and manner of

the treason *." He might have added, that it was only a few of the King's confidential servants who were instructed in the manner in which they were privately to act for accomplishing his Majesty's purpose. What outwardly appeared, consisted well enough with the opinion inculcated upon the public, of the guilt of the Earl and his brother, and might easily deceive such an upright nobleman as the Earl of Mar, which, by his letter to Mr. Robert Bruce, inserted in Calderwood's MS. seems to have actually happened.

Sir John Scott of Scotstarvet, author of the History of Scottish Statesmen from the year 1550 to the year 1650, was in his early years a favourite of King James VI. and afterwards of King Charles I. who appointed him one of the Lords of Session. He wrote his book in his old age, but it was not printed till the year 1754. An ancient MS. of it is in the possession of the Literary and Antiquarian Society of Perth. I shall quote from that MS. which, in some things, differs materially from the manufactured printed copy.

* Moyses' Memoirs, p. 309.

Sir John, speaking of the Gowrie conspiracy, expresses himself as being doubtful of the truth of it; or rather as disbelieving it: for he pronounces it to be a state secret, consequently involved in mystery, and therefore not safe to be examined. His words are, "John, Earl of Gowrie, within a year after his return from his travels, with his brother Alexander, were both killed in his house at St. Johnstown, August 5, 1600, for alleged deep treason against the King, of intention to have murdered him, the Earl having invited him to his own house. Their dead bodies were carried to Edinburgh, and their heads put upon the most eminent places of justice in that town. The story is extant in divers languages; but, for the truth of the narration, it is not fit to be dived into here, *nam rimanda non sunt arcana imperii*, (for the secrets of empire are not to be narrowly searched.) The earldom was divided by the King betwixt the three who had been most active in the slaughter *." The three whom Sir John mentions by name, were "John Ramsay the page, Sir Thomas Erskine, and Sir Hugh Herris."

* MS. p. 26. See also printed copy, p. 28.

I formerly noticed the cautious manner in which Mr. David Calderwood, for his own security, wrote concerning the Gowrie conspiracy. He did not directly deny the truth of it, but he shewed his disbelief, by confidently stating the incredible circumstances with which it was said to be accompanied. It became more safe for writers, after the revolution of government in the year 1688, freely to express their opinion of the cruelty and injustice of King James VI. in the affair of the Earl of Gowrie; especially after the unsuccessful issue of the insurrection in 1745, in favour of the Prince, who bore among his friends the title of King James VIII.

I have declared, as gathered from the circumstantial evidence I have examined, that my own opinion is in favour of the innocence of the Earl and his brother. Perhaps a time may arrive when a more direct proof can be obtained. Some authentic documents may be found, either among the old government papers, or in the repository of some private family, which would effectually put an end to the controversy relating to that historical event, which has hitherto been agitated relating to the death of John, Earl of Gowrie. I

have written, I hope not tediously, what at present may seem to exhaust the subject; and I have endeavoured to use that simplicity of style which appeared to me most suitable to the facts which it behoved me to mention.

I shall subjoin the reflection made by Mr. Calderwood, after he had inserted in his MS. the King's narrative, denominated "A Discourse on the vile Conspiracy," together with the depositions of the witnesses examined. He had also offered some of his own remarks. It was probably about the year 1624 that he wrote as follows: "Howbeit, for these considerations above written, many did not believe, nor do to this hour believe, 'the Discourse of the Conspiracy,' and the depositions of the witnesses extant in print; yet many were not anxious to consider every particular circumstance of the Discourse and depositions. They were content to be ignorant, or to believe others, who had not inquired so narrowly as some did for their own satisfaction. They suspend their judgment till the time of a farther revelation of the truth of the matter. Here we cannot but call to remembrance a Latin distich painted above the

chimney-brace of Ruthven many years since, which followeth:

> *"Vera diu latitant, sed, longo temporis usu,*
> *Emergunt tandem quæ latuere diu."*

In my title-page I have given the following translation of the two lines mentioned by Calderwood:

> "Truths, which were long conceal'd, emerge to light,
> And controverted facts are rendered bright."

The infirmities which I feel at my time of life, must plead my excuse for not protracting my present work, by entering into a minute and critical examination of the trials of George Sprott the notary, and of Robert Logan of Restalrig. Sprott was executed at Edinburgh, August 12, 1608, for his having concealed, according to his own voluntary confession, the knowledge which he had of the treasonable design of the Earl of Gowrie. Logan's dead body was dug out of his grave at Restalrig, and, according to the custom when dead persons were accused of treason, it was brought to the hall of judgment, April, 1609. He was pronounced a traitor, and his goods and estate were

confiscated, for his having been concerned as an accomplice in the plot of the late Earl of Gowrie.

The whole evidence depended on Sprott's veracity. He at first hoped for such rewards as had been conferred on Andrew Henderson. When he found, however, that he was in danger of a capital punishment, he revoked his confession, but was forced again, by torture, to resume it. According to Lord Cromarty's account, he seems to have expected that his life would have been spared, even after he had been thrown from the ladder at the gallows. But the poor deluded and visionary minded man was allowed to expire.

Mr. William Panton, among many other writers, has very ably shewed the incredibility of Sprott's evidence; and the testimony of Archbishop Spottiswood, who was both present at Sprott's trial and execution, ought, indeed, to preclude all credit to Sprott's confession. He says, "Whether or not I should mention the arraignment and execution of George Sprott, notary in Eyemouth, I am doubtful. His story seemed a very fiction, and to be a mere invention of the man's own brain; for neither did he shew the letter which he said was written by the Earl of Gowrie; nor could any man

think that Gowrie, who went about that treason so secretly, would have communicated the matter with such a man as Restalrig was known to be *."

I shall only observe, that the fabricated letters pretended to be written by Logan of Restalrig, and sent to the Earl, were addressed to him as being in Perth in the month of July, 1600, and pretended to be answered from that city: Therefore they could not be genuine; for the Earl of Gowrie was not then at Perth, but innocently amusing himself with the deer-hunting at his estate and castle of Arrochrie, in Strathbraan, and district of Atholl.

* Spottis. p. 509.

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A history of the Life & Death of John, Earl of Gowrie 181

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